

# WIRE

FOR ACTIVISTS AND INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS  
APRIL / MAY 2010 VOLUME 40 ISSUE 002

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



## GIVING LIFE WITHOUT RISK



## LOOK OUT FOR...

Our poster for World Press Freedom Day (3 May 2010), designed by Iranian graphic designer Payam Abdolmadi. In December 2008, after he collaborated with Iran's Writers Association, Payam Abdolmadi was picked up by security agents and detained for 70 days. He says he was tortured, interrogated and accused of "espionage" while in detention. The authorities also froze his bank account. He and his wife are currently seeking asylum in Finland.

Numerous Iranian journalists and bloggers have been arrested since the country's disputed presidential election in June 2009. Many were sentenced to hefty prison terms after grossly unfair trials. Repression of freedom of expression has included restrictions on foreign journalists, blocking websites, closure of newspapers and disruption of internet and phone services. New laws such as a "Cyber security" law have been introduced to further criminalize activities which amount to the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression, along with a new unit set up to scrutinize websites and bloggers who fall foul of the authorities' narrow view of acceptable discourse.



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- » Have you shared the information with anyone?
- » What would you like to see more of in future issues?
- » Do you have photos or articles that you would like to share with other members?
- » And finally, have you visited the new blog [www.amnesty.org/livewire](http://www.amnesty.org/livewire)?

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*Cover photo:* Rasmata with her one-day old baby, Yalgado Hospital, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, June 2009. © Anna Kari

## GETTING WIRE

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# INSIDE THIS WIRE

## GIVING LIFE WITHOUT RISK

In Burkina Faso, more than 2,000 women die every year from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. In the USA, more than two women die every day for the same reasons. In many cases, these deaths could be prevented – so why do they keep happening? **PAGE 2**



## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Journalists are still being killed, imprisoned and harassed for doing their work. Read about the repression of independent media in Somalia (**PAGE 7**), Cuba (**PAGE 8**), Yemen (**PAGE 8**) and act now.

## GUANTÁNAMO DETAINEES: CAMPAIGN FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Amnesty International is calling on more governments to offer protection to Guantánamo detainees who risk human rights violations in their own countries. Read about the campaign on **PAGE 15**.

## THE RIGHT WAY TO FIGHT POVERTY

The UN Millennium Development Goals must make respect for human rights a top priority in the fight against poverty. Find out why on **PAGE 16**.



## WHAT ELSE?

There are three **POSTCARDS** for you to sign and send: call for an end to human rights abuses of migrants in Mexico (details on **PAGE 20**); urge the Italian authorities to stop a new housing plan that discriminates against Romani communities (**PAGE 7**); and call on the Malaysian government to end all forms of corporal punishment (**PAGE 20**). Elsewhere, read the WIRE q&a with Guatemalan journalist and human rights activist Iduvina Hernández (**PAGES 13-14**) and find out what can be done about torture in Kazakhstan (**PAGE 18**); police ill-treatment in France and the persecution of members of the Ahmadiyya community in Indonesia (**PAGE 18**).

**ACT NOW  
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# GIVING LIFE WITHOUT RISK

When women die from preventable causes during pregnancy and child birth, their governments are violating their right to life. Some women face barriers in accessing adequate health care because they are poor; others because of their race or nationality. Discrimination damages women's health around the globe. WIRE looks at Burkina Faso and the USA, two countries that might seem worlds apart, but share a deadly denial of rights for pregnant women.

One week after Mariam, a woman from Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, gave birth to twins, she became dizzy and had severe headaches. Ali, her husband, took her back to the hospital. "Mariam was moaning and shaking a lot and several medical personnel told me I had to pay for products, I don't know which ones," he says. "I paid several sums". The following day, Mariam had to be taken back to the emergency ward. Her husband was again given a prescription and had to pay for a box of gloves.

"After waiting for two hours, I went to ask why the treatments had still not begun. I was told that there were sicker patients to treat first. I kept waiting and then asked why they were not taking care of my wife. I was told: 'You must first take care of your patient'. I then realized that I had to pay so that they would take care of my wife: I handed over 5,000 CFA francs (around US\$11.50) and then my wife was taken care of." Ali was given another prescription but his wife died before she could use it. Mariam's eldest brother said: "My sister died due to a lack of means and adequate treatment. The hospital, it is like a chamber of commerce. If you are poor, you are left; if you can pay, you are treated".

More than 2,000 women die every year in Burkina Faso from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Most of these deaths could have been prevented. Some women die because they cannot reach a health facility capable of treating them, or because they arrive too late. Many lose their lives because their relatives cannot pay the fees demanded by medical personnel. Others die because of shortages – shortages of blood, drugs, equipment or qualified medical staff.

Maternal health is a human rights issue. Preventable maternal mortality can reflect a variety of human rights violations, including the right to life, the right to freedom from discrimination, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health. When a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth because the government fails to address preventable causes of maternal death, that government violates the woman's right to life.

## WOMEN GET NO SAY

Women in Burkina Faso suffer discrimination in every area of their lives, with unequal access to education, health care and employment. Particularly in rural areas, women have little or no

say over whether and when to have children, and how many; if they do not have children they often risk abandonment and rejection. These decisions are out of their hands, yet they pay for them with their lives. The discrimination goes further: it is the poorest, the least educated and those women living in rural areas (home to 80 per cent of the population) who are most likely to die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

The government in Burkina Faso has been taking steps to address this injustice. In February 2010, the President committed to lifting all financial barriers to emergency obstetric care and access to family planning, as part of a strategy to reduce maternal mortality in Burkina Faso. Previously, the government subsidized the cost of maternal care by 80 per cent and gave free care to women in extreme poverty ('indigent women'). However, the cost of health care still prevents women from receiving life-saving treatment, and families nearly always have to

**Left: Korotoumou O suffered complications while delivering twins at a local clinic. She was taken to hospital, but one of the babies was stillborn. Ouahigouya, Burkina Faso, June 2009.**



**Issaka Nabole and two of his sons. One of his three wives died in childbirth. Burkina Faso, June 2009.**

pay more in practice than they should. Health care staff often demand unofficial payments for treatment, supplies or transport. Amnesty International believes that making maternal health care free of charge for individuals would improve access for all pregnant women, especially the poorest.

## A CRISIS WITHOUT BORDERS

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet the problem is not simply about lack of resources, it is also about a government's failure to maximize the resources it does have to realize the right to health (including sexual and reproductive health) for all its population. The USA, for example, spends more than any other country on health care, and more on maternal health than any other type of hospital care. Despite this, women in the USA have a higher risk of dying of pregnancy-related complications than those in 40 other countries. More than two women die every

day in the USA from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Approximately half of these deaths could be prevented if maternal health care were available, accessible and of good quality for all women in the country.

For many women, especially those on low incomes, health care costs are beyond reach, particularly in rural and inner-city areas.

Nearly 13 million (or one in five) women of reproductive age (15 to 44), have no health insurance. Some 42 per cent of births are covered by a government-funded programme for categories of people on low incomes, Medicaid. However, complicated bureaucratic requirements mean that eligible women often face significant delays in receiving prenatal care. In some cases, doctors may be unwilling or unable to provide maternal health care because of high costs and low fees, or because of the complexities of the Medicaid system.

Despite the considerable investment in health care in the USA, the system continues to fail those who need maternal care. There is a shortage of health care professionals; no nationally standardized protocols addressing the leading causes of death; and insufficient information about the signs of

complications and the risks of intervention, such as inducing labour or caesarian sections. Finally, there are no federal requirements to report maternal deaths – 29 states and the District of Columbia have no maternal death review process at all.

Such faults in the health system mean that when poor women in the USA become pregnant, they are less likely to be in good health and are given late or inadequate prenatal care. They receive inadequate or inappropriate care during delivery and have limited access to care after they give birth. The results can be disastrous. Women who do not receive prenatal care are three to four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than women who do. Those with high-risk pregnancies are 5.3 times more likely to die if they do not receive prenatal care.

## DISCRIMINATION CAN BE DEADLY

Many women in the USA face discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, migration status, Indigenous status or because they have low incomes or live in rural areas. In all these instances, discrimination profoundly affects their chances of accessing

## MAKING WOMEN PART OF THE SOLUTION

Darleen San Jose-Estuart is an Obstetrician-Gynecologist in Davao City, Southern Philippines. Specializing in reproductive health rights, she has been working to increase awareness of rights within the health system in the Philippines. She told WIRE how medical practitioners can ensure women have more say in the decisions that affect their lives and their health.

"In the Philippines, the health system is such that people are not provided free health services by the government, the majority do not have health insurance, and private health care is expensive. As a consequence, women who are living in poverty do not have easy access to health services. It is doubly unfortunate that the poorer they are, the sicker they become because of combined factors of poor nutrition, lack of education, and unhealthy living conditions.

"Providing comprehensive reproductive health services directly to individual women allows me to empower them and promote their rights. I listen to their problems, ask them relevant questions. I let them know their options, involve them in making decisions about their health care, and respect the informed decisions they make. We find ways by which their health needs can be addressed given the limitations of health care costs. I provide information and let them ask questions. I make it a point to include their partners and family members in the discussions, particularly when they disagree with the women's decisions. I respect [the women's] decisions to sometimes refuse treatment."



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adequate maternal health care services. African-American women in the USA are nearly four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women. This disparity has not improved in more than 20 years. Native American and Alaskan Native women are 3.6 times, and African-American and Latina women are 2.5 times as likely as white women to receive late or no prenatal care. They are also more likely to experience poorer quality of care, discrimination or culturally inappropriate treatment.

Inamarie Stith-Rouse, a 33-year-old African-American woman, had an emergency c-section (caesarean) and delivered a healthy baby girl, Trinity, at a hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, in June 2003. Her husband, Andre Rouse, said that after the birth she was distressed and struggling to breathe, but that staff dismissed their requests for help, saying it was "no big deal" and that they were "too emotional". Andre Rouse told Amnesty International he felt race played a part in the staff's failure to react. It was hours before appropriate tests were undertaken, and by then it was too late. Inamarie Stith-Rouse slipped into a coma and died four days later. Andre Rouse said: "Her last words to me were, 'Andre, I'm afraid.' "

For more than 20 years the US authorities have failed to improve the outcomes and disparities in maternal health care. It is essential that the debate about health care in the USA goes beyond health care coverage and addresses the need for access to quality health care for all, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination.

### ACT NOW

Mark World Health Day on 7 April by going to [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) and getting more information on the issue. Amnesty International's report, *Giving life, risking death: Maternal mortality in Burkina Faso*, is available online at <http://snipr.com/uq5dw>. The report *Deadly Delivery: The maternal health care crisis in the USA* is available on <http://snipr.com/v6bvg>



© John Carl D'Annibale / Albany Times Union

**Above:** Inamarie Stith-Rouse died four days after giving birth to her daughter in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, in June 2003.

**Left:** Diane Rizk McCabe's mother and children hold a photo of Diane. Troy, New York State, USA, July 2009. Diane suffered excessive bleeding after she had delivered her healthy baby girl by caesarean section and died in September 2007.





GO TO [WWW.AMNESTY.ORG/LIVEWIRE](http://WWW.AMNESTY.ORG/LIVEWIRE)  
TO CATCH UP WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S BLOG

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A makeshift camp for displaced people in Delmas, Haiti, March 2010. Distribution of tents and tarpaulins did not reach everyone in the camp.

### THE DAILY STRUGGLE IN HAITI'S CAMPS

By Gerardo Ducos, Amnesty International delegate in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

"Two months after the earthquake, thousands in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere still await a first glimpse of humanitarian aid. In the four makeshift camps we visited during our first days in Haiti, life is a daily struggle and conditions are dire to say the least. People are without water, food, sanitation or shelter. Resilience and solidarity with each other are the only things these camp-dwellers can rely on. There are camps everywhere. Every single open space, on public or private land, is occupied by hundreds or thousands of people. They are sheltered mostly under sheets and towels, in tents, under tarpaulins or, for the most industrious, in structures of recycled wood and tin."

Read more at <http://sn.im/uvdpn>

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DEFENDS GUINEA RESEARCH AGAINST FRENCH GOVERNMENT CRITICISM

By Mike Lewis, Amnesty International's Control Arms / Military Security Police Researcher

"During November and December 2009, Amnesty International researchers travelled to Conakry in Guinea. We went to document one of West Africa's most serious episodes of violence and human rights abuse in recent years: the 'Bloody Monday' massacre on 28 September 2009, when Guinean security forces opened fire with tear gas and live ammunition at protestors trapped in Conakry's stadium, killing over 150 people and publicly raping more than 40 women.

"We gathered dozens of interviews with victims, eyewitnesses, medical staff, government officials and military personnel. We obtained film and photographs of the events. And we cross-checked these against hospital records, confidential military documents, physical evidence, and communication with private security companies around the world.

"One of our most disturbing findings was that the supplies of ammunition, tear gas, military vehicles and other equipment used on "Bloody Monday" had been authorized in recent years by governments around the world – including from France – despite the Guinean security forces' decade-long record of violent repression using these kinds of weapons.

Read more at <http://sn.im/uvdsg>

### EVALUATING THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Tina Musuya, women's rights activist from Uganda, blogging from the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York

"I'm attending my first CSW and it's also my first time at the UN in New York. I'm finding the forums a great place to stop and evaluate where we really are on achieving gender equality. Big international organizations and smaller grassroots ones come together so it's a good time to think about all the different international treaties and policies and compare what these say to what is actually happening on the ground.

"On Friday I spoke at an event hosted by Amnesty International which looked at how women who have experienced sexual violence can access justice and the services that they need. I talked about the situation in Uganda where I work, where levels of sexual violence are high and women who have been raped don't have many options but to try to forget what has happened to them. The obstacles women face, such as pressure from family members to settle out of court, or lack of confidentiality at police stations might seem really trivial but they are actually huge hindrances for women in getting access to justice."

Read more at <http://sn.im/uvdr9>



# ITALIAN AUTHORITIES VIOLATE HOUSING RIGHTS OF ROMA

**M**aria Dumitru and Marius Alexandru, both Roma of Romanian origin, have three young children. Since they came to Italy in 2004, their family has been forcibly evicted six times but has never been offered any kind of alternative accommodation. On 11 November 2009, they were forcibly evicted from a camp near Via Centocelle in Rome. “Now we will sleep in the street. What can we do?” says Marius Alexandru. “We have been in seven different camps in five years.”

Camp Via Centocelle was one of more than 100 Roma camps in Rome. The Italian authorities have developed a plan to close down almost all of these camps and resettle some of the residents in 13 camps on the outskirts of the city.

This “Nomad Plan”, which has been developed without any genuine consultation with those who will be most affected, will see thousands of

Roma forcibly evicted from their current residence. Some – the criteria remains unclear – will be offered alternative accommodation in other camps, but not permanent housing. Others will be offered no alternative accommodation at all. They will need to find shelter as best they can, where they can – until they are moved on again.

Italy is obligated under several international human rights treaties to refrain from and prevent forced evictions. Amnesty International believes that the “Nomad Plan” will result in a range of human rights violations, which will keep Roma trapped in a vicious cycle of discrimination, marginalization and poverty. Roma already struggle to find steady employment; they are usually left to eke out a living as best they can, mostly through recycling scrap metal or as casual labourers. The “Nomad Plan” is likely to make the situation



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**Maria Dumitru and Marius Alexandru with their daughter at their home in Via Centocelle camp, Rome, in September 2009. Their home was demolished by the authorities two months after this picture was taken.**

even worse – leaving Roma with fewer employment opportunities, and even less possibility of integrating into Italian society.

## ACT NOW

Please sign and send a postcard to the Italian authorities (see insert). Ask them to postpone the implementation of the “Nomad Plan”, to revise it on the basis of proper consultation with those who are affected by it, and to ensure that it respects and protects human rights.

## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

# SOMALIA'S JOURNALISTS IN DANGER

**A**li Yusuf Adan, a correspondent for Radio Somaliweyn, was abducted on 21 February 2010 in Wanleweyn by the armed group al-Shabab, apparently after a report on a killing in the area was broadcast. His is not an isolated case. Other journalists have been harassed and even killed.

Somalia is still one of the most dangerous places on earth to be a journalist. Nine journalists were killed in 2009 alone, including three who were deliberately shot dead. This was the highest number of journalists

killed in a year since 1991. Faced with such odds, many have fled the country. The few who remain in Somalia risk being killed or injured in indiscriminate or deliberate attacks.

In February 2009, Said Tahlil Ahmed, director of the independent radio station HornAfrik, was gunned down in Bakara market in the capital Mogadishu. He had been summoned along with other journalists to meet members of al-Shabab who were displeased with local coverage of the appointment of the new President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Al-Shabab had rejected the election and considered the newly elected President to be illegitimate.

Armed groups opposed to the Somali government now control many towns, restricting what local media can report on, shutting down radio stations and threatening journalists

into supporting them or leaving. This makes it almost impossible to disseminate vital information on the situation in Somalia within or beyond the country. Up until early 2009, the TFG also repeatedly harassed and attacked journalists.

In January 2009, 36-year-old Hassan Mayow Hassan, a Radio Shabelle correspondent, was shot dead in Afgoye, a town 30km south of Mogadishu. He was reportedly stopped by government soldiers who accused him of collaborating with armed groups, and shot him twice in the head.

## ACT NOW

The TFG pledged to address justice and reconciliation under the 2008 Djibouti peace agreement. Please call on the TFG to carry out prompt, effective and

independent investigations into the unlawful killings of all Somali journalists and to bring those responsible to justice. There are few operating Somali embassies. Please write to either or both of the TFG representatives below:

Excellency Nur Hassan Hussein  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Via dei Gracchi, 305  
00192 Rome  
Italy

Excellency Dr Elmi Ahmed Duale  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations  
425 East 61st Street, Suite 702  
New York, N.Y. 10021  
USA

## YEMEN: REPRESSION OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Recent events in Yemen reflect the government's growing intolerance of the press, especially in relation to coverage of the conflict in Sa'da Governorate and continuing protests in the south.

Hisham Bashraheel, editor of the Yemeni newspaper *al-Ayyam*, was arrested in January 2010 together with two of his sons. All three remain held. They were arrested at *al-Ayyam*'s offices in Aden following a sit-in to mark eight months since the authorities effectively banned the newspaper from printing and distributing copies. Armed forces were reported to have fired at the protesters and the newspaper's security guards returned fire. Two security personnel died in the exchange.

The targeting of *al-Ayyam* began on 30 April 2009, when the authorities confiscated printed copies of the paper. Similar action was soon taken

against other newspapers. The government then announced that it would ban any newspaper that expressed support for activities deemed to harm the unity of the country, particularly calls for the secession of the south.

Muhammad al-Maqalih, a journalist and editor of the Yemeni Socialist Party's website ([www.aleshteraki.net](http://www.aleshteraki.net)), was seized on 17 September 2009 in a street in Sana'a and disappeared until December, when the authorities acknowledged they were holding him. His family was allowed to visit him on 7 February 2010 at the Political Security Prison in the capital and found him in poor health. That same day, he was questioned about information he had published relating to the conflict in Sa'da Governorate. Security-related charges have been brought against him.

On 16 January 2010, Anissa



© Private

Muhammad al-Maqalih

'Uthman, a journalist with the weekly *al-Wassat*, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in her absence for defaming President Ali Abdullah Saleh. According to media reports, she was prosecuted because some of her articles criticized the imprisonment of human rights activists. She and several others have been tried before a court in Sana'a that hears media-related cases. The establishment of the court in May 2009 was a further sign of growing media repression in Yemen.

## ACT NOW

Let the President of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, know that if Muhammad al-Maqalih, Hisham Bashraheel and sons Hani and Muhammad Bashraheel are being held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, then they must be released immediately and unconditionally. All detainees must be protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and be allowed regular access to a lawyer, their family and any medical treatment. Please also express concern about the sentencing of Anissa 'Uthman.

Please write to:

President

His Excellency Ali Abdullah Saleh  
Office of the President of the Republic  
of Yemen, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen  
Fax: +967 1 274 147

Salutation: Your Excellency

For more information, please go to  
<http://snipr.com/uso0e>

## CUBA: RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CONTINUE

Several independent journalists are among more than 50 prisoners of conscience currently incarcerated in Cuba for criticizing the government and advocating greater respect for fundamental freedoms. Many others continue their journalistic activities despite the risk.

Yosvani Anzardo Hernández, director of online newspaper *Candonga*, was arbitrarily detained for 14 days in September 2009 in his home province of Holguín. Also a correspondent for Miami-based news

website *Payo Libre*, he stated that he was threatened with prosecution under Law No. 88 For the Protection of the National Independence and Economy of Cuba. This law criminalizes contacts with foreign press and carries sentences of up to 20 years' imprisonment.

Yosvani Anzardo Hernández was eventually released without charge. Police had confiscated his personal computer, deactivating the server needed to access his website, [www.candonga.org](http://www.candonga.org), which has

remained inaccessible ever since. Speaking in relation to the restrictions he and his colleagues face, Yosvani Anzardo Hernández told Amnesty International: "We were hoping that the government would understand that what we were doing was exercising a right, we weren't hurting anyone... we were simply relating what was happening in the country, but [the government] considered this to be dangerous."

In Cuba, all media outlets are state-owned and the government, determined to curb criticism and maintain its control over all aspects of society, uses repressive tactics and criminal proceedings to restrict and punish the free expression of opinions. Independent journalists and bloggers face a persistent pattern of harassment, arbitrary detention and possible prison sentences following

unfair trials, simply for peacefully seeking to exercise their right to freedom of expression.

As a result, Cubans are unable to enjoy their right to seek, receive and impart information. Freedom of expression is critical to the dignity and personal development of every individual, and is essential for the fulfilment of other universally recognized human rights. The Cuban government must therefore take the necessary steps to lift restrictions on freedom of expression in order to ensure respect and protection of all human rights in Cuba.



A young woman with dark skin and short hair is sitting on a metal bench. She is wearing a grey and white striped polo shirt. She is holding a baby wrapped in a blue and white patterned cloth. The background is dark and out of focus.

# MATERNAL HEALTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT

**AMNESTY**  
INTERNATIONAL



**execution**

Remember all imprisoned





Fatimata N, aged 20, holds her newly born baby in Kiembara, Burkina Faso, June 2009. More than 2,000 women die every year in Burkina Faso from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.



# IDUVINA HERNÁNDEZ

Iduvina Hernández has been campaigning for human rights in Guatemala since the 1970s. As founder and director of the organization SEDEM, she pushes the Guatemalan government to reveal the truth about the human rights violations that were committed during three decades of internal armed conflict. Knowing she is not alone gives her the courage to carry on with her work despite the risks to her and to her family.



## **Q** What sparked your interest in human rights?

**A** My interest in human rights started in the 1970s when Guatemala was immersed in a brutal internal conflict. It had begun the previous decade and concluded with the signing of the Peace Accords of 1996. At that time, those of us who were in the university student movement decided to fight for the defence and protection of human rights in Guatemala, in a context in which the most elementary human right, the right to life, was being completely disregarded by the state.

During the 1980s I had to go into exile, but I carried on working for human rights as a journalist. I focused on the persecution of exiled people and refugees from Central America. Back in Guatemala, I did more journalism and worked for several civil society organizations until 2000, when my colleagues and I founded Security under Democracy (Seguridad en Democracia, SEDEM). Our intent was to focus on and fight for human rights. We wanted people to understand that it is the state's duty to protect everyone.

And that everyone should be able to exercise their rights without being threatened or putting themselves at risk. We are committed to promoting memory, truth and justice.

## **Q** What do you think are the main challenges in the struggle for human rights in Guatemala?

**A** The greatest challenge is probably to end impunity. In Guatemala, not one of the high-ranking military officers responsible for the genocide of more than 200,000 people, or the enforced disappearance of another 50,000 people, has been tried, let alone convicted. We can compare that to other countries, for example Argentina, where criminals have been tried and condemned. This has not happened in Guatemala because the people who have committed these crimes have lots of power. They control the courts, the security system, the political parties, the business sectors and the press. The impunity that these criminals have been enjoying also serves to protect new criminals. It is very difficult to distinguish between the groups that abused human rights

during the armed conflict and the groups close to the drug traders, arms traders and the people traffickers who now finance the political parties. So the challenge is to defeat this deep-rooted culture of impunity. It is an enormous challenge and the risks are huge, but the hope is still strong.

## **Q** If you could change one thing about the situation in Guatemala, what would it be?

**A** I would give free access to archives containing information on past human rights violations. This would allow us to find out the facts, what happened and who is responsible. I would also ensure that the legal system is stronger and able to achieve justice for the victims. →



© Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala

**Q What impact has your work had on your own life and your family?**

**A** Firstly, it has given me the satisfaction of doing something that I believe in and contributing to change – I've been trying to do this or more than half of my life. Fulfilling my duty towards those who gave their life to change the reality of life in Guatemala – this is of the outmost importance to me. My family, my partner in particular, obviously fear for my safety. But he is also pleased when I am happy in my work.

My siblings, my parents and the rest of my family have always had to live with the consequences of my work, of my being persecuted. They have always made it clear that their solidarity is unshaken. They give me a lot of strength.

**Q What keeps you motivated when times are hard?**

**A** Knowing that I am not alone. And that there is no other way to build the kind of democracy we want to have in Guatemala.

**Q What does Amnesty International mean to you?**

**A** Thousands of lit candles in thousands of places around the world, giving light, support and companionship to those persecuted because of their love of humanity. One friendly hand which multiplies every time someone needs it. Amnesty international is a voice that cries out for those who are silenced.

**Q Do you have a message for our readers?**

**A** Please give your support, in whatever way you can, to human rights defenders all over the world.

**Q What is the single most important lesson that your activism has taught you?**

**A** That human solidarity can overcome any obstacle, break down any wall, and is the best shield against aggression.

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Relatives hold a Mayan ceremony to communicate with the dead and support the work of exhuming the remains of victims of the internal armed conflict, Guatemala, April 2008.



# GUANTÁNAMO DETAINEES: CAMPAIGN FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Many detainees remain in Guantánamo because they have nowhere else to go. They face persecution if they return to their own countries and are unable to find refuge elsewhere. Amnesty International has been calling on governments to help close Guantánamo for good by offering detainees a home and the chance of a new life.



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GUANTÁNAMO

**O**n 3 February 2010, the Swiss Federal Council agreed to provide a new home to two Uighur brothers who had been held without charge or trial in Guantánamo for nearly eight years.

Arkin and Bahtiyar Mahmud, who are from the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China, would have been at serious risk of torture or execution if returned to China.

The Swiss decision followed years of campaigning by Amnesty International Switzerland as part of the international protection project run by Amnesty International. The project involves activists in Europe and beyond campaigning for their governments to offer protection to detainees from Guantánamo who cannot be returned to their home countries for fear of human rights violations.

Other countries that have received men from Guantánamo include Albania, Belgium, France, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal and Slovakia. In many cases, these decisions have followed sustained lobbying, media work and grassroots activism by Amnesty International and others. Ten other Uighurs have recently been offered new homes – albeit temporarily – in Bermuda and Palau.

Despite these positive moves, there are still more than 40 detainees in Guantánamo in need of humanitarian protection. They include men from China, Libya, the Russian Federation, Syria and Tunisia. Unless more countries step forward, some of them will remain at serious risk of forcible return

to abuse or face further months or even years of indefinite detention by the US authorities.

These are men who, to Amnesty International's knowledge, the US authorities have no intention of charging and trying. They remain detained for the sole reason that they have no place to go. Some of them have been cleared for release. All have effectively been abandoned at Guantánamo.

In January 2010, Amnesty International, the Centre for Constitutional Rights, Reprieve and Moazzam Begg, former Guantánamo detainee and head of the organization Cageprisoners, embarked on a European tour to ask other states to accept Guantánamo detainees. Countries visited included Luxembourg, Germany and Sweden.

Some states, particularly in Europe, have persistently called for Guantánamo to be closed but have failed to help make this a reality. This is despite the June 2009 European Union-US joint agreement on the closure of Guantánamo which expressed the readiness of certain European Union member states to assist with the reception of former detainees on a case-by-case basis.

Recognizing that adapting to life after Guantánamo in an unfamiliar country will be difficult, Amnesty International is also calling on governments to provide these men with support mechanisms to help them adapt to their new lives. This includes providing them with access to appropriate medical, legal, psychological and social

**Former Guantánamo detainee Lakhdar Boumediene with Amnesty International delegate Natacha Mension, France, February 2010.**

support. Amnesty International sections are helping by liaising with relevant NGOs in their countries to provide expert advice and practical help for the men.

Lakhdar Boumediene is an Algerian national who was arrested in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he had been living. He was held in Guantánamo for nearly eight years without charge or trial. In May 2009 he was given a chance to live with his family in France. Nearly a year later, while still facing challenges adapting to life after Guantánamo, he is settling into his new life with the help of Amnesty International France. He told Amnesty International: "It was very hard for me... I tried to build my life. And now I think I am like all people. I feel I am human."

If other countries agree to provide humanitarian protection for those still in Guantánamo, more men like Lakhdar Boumediene will be able to rebuild their lives in safety and stability and we will be one step nearer to closing Guantánamo for good.

## ACT NOW

To find out more and to watch a video featuring interviews with Lakhdar Boumediene and human rights workers, go to <http://snipr.com/v01yz>

# THE RIGHT WAY TO FIGHT POVERTY





## RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE AT THE HEART OF THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY. THIS SHOULD BE ON THE MINDS OF WORLD LEADERS AS THEY MEET TO DISCUSS PROGRESS ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS THIS SEPTEMBER.

**T**he UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's most prominent global initiative against poverty. Drawn from the UN Millennium Declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2000, they lay out what the international community hopes to achieve by 2015.

The MDGs have helped to put poverty firmly on the world's agenda. However, they fail to address human rights violations sufficiently even though upholding human rights is key to reducing poverty. Respect for rights requires governments to tackle discrimination and advance equality; to give adequate focus to those who are most marginalized and most vulnerable; to prioritize realizing the minimum essential levels of economic, social and cultural rights for all; and to enable everyone to participate actively in the decisions that affect their rights.

As governments fail to make real progress on some key symptoms of poverty – slums and maternal mortality are only two examples – it is becoming clear that they cannot make fair and sustainable progress towards achieving the MDGs if human rights are left out of the equation.

### HUMAN RIGHTS CANNOT BE LEFT OUT

Governments must remember that human rights violations obstruct progress towards achieving the MDGs. In Peru, discrimination against Indigenous women is undermining efforts to provide maternal health care. Indigenous women have less access to health services because they do not have the necessary identity documents, cannot afford the costs of health care, and do not get sufficient information in a language that they can understand.

**Left: A girl walks in Penchinat camp, a makeshift camp for people displaced by the recent earthquake, Jacmel, Haiti.**

The targets set by the MDGs in some cases ask governments to do less than they are already required to under international human rights law. For example, the MDGs only commit to improving the lives of 100 million slum residents by 2020. But this ignores the fact that there are already more than 1 billion people living in slums and that states are immediately obliged to protect all of them from forced evictions and other human rights violations. The MDGs also fail to address women's rights and have unacceptably narrow targets on gender equality and empowerment. Under international law, governments should address gender discrimination and guarantee equality in all their actions to reach the MDGs. States also often fail to ensure respect for rights to freedom of expression, information, assembly and association – rights that are crucial in order for people to participate in decision-making and to hold governments accountable for fulfilling on their obligations.

The governments of developed countries are committed to assisting developing countries to meet their targets. However, the MDG framework does not require them to ensure that their involvement is consistent with human rights standards. For example, there is no emphasis on safeguards being put in place to ensure that development projects do not result in people being forcibly evicted from their homes.

### BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY

People living in poverty should not have to rely solely on the goodwill of their authorities and should be able to hold their governments accountable when their rights are violated. In reality, they are rarely able to. The same governments are also not held accountable for human rights violations when reporting on progress towards the MDGs.

Most do not specify whether their efforts are consistent with human rights standards, or whether they are addressing issues such as forced evictions or gender discrimination.

Governments must ensure that courts, national human rights commissions and other mechanisms are accessible and can hear complaints about all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, social and political. This means, for example, ensuring that women in Sierra Leone who are denied life-saving health care can seek redress in court. In addition, all states must ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, thus allowing their people access to an international complaints mechanism for violations of economic, social and cultural rights.

In September 2010, world leaders will assemble at a UN Summit to assess their progress on the MDGs. Amnesty International is calling on governments to commit to making their MDG policies consistent with their human rights

obligations. Through the Demand Dignity Campaign, Amnesty International is carrying out research and campaigning for specific changes to national MDG plans to conform to human rights obligations.

### ACT NOW

For more information on the Demand Dignity Campaign, go to [www.amnesty.org/demand-dignity](http://www.amnesty.org/demand-dignity) and [www.demanddignity.amnesty.org](http://www.demanddignity.amnesty.org)

## THE UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### GOAL 1

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

### GOAL 2

Achieve universal primary education

### GOAL 3

Promote gender equality and empower women

### GOAL 4

Reduce child mortality

### GOAL 5

Improve maternal health

### GOAL 6

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

### GOAL 7

Ensure environmental sustainability

### GOAL 8

Develop a global partnership for development



## TORTURE IN KAZAKHSTAN

When Rasim Bairamov was taken to the local police station in July 2008, police officers told him that they needed “to have a word”.

But Rasim Bairamov said they did much more than that. He said he was beaten all over his body with fists and chairs. He was kicked and had a gas mask pulled over his head and the air supply turned off. The police officers in Rudnov, northern Kazakhstan, wanted him and his friend Aleksandr Bruikhanov to confess to stealing some money and three bottles of beer from a local shop, a charge which both men denied. But after 48 hours of alleged beatings, sleep deprivation and threats to harm their families, the young men signed a “confession”. It was not until this point that their detention was formally registered and they were informed of their rights.

In October 2008, Dmitri Tian was

summoned to a police station in Astana to be questioned as a witness in a murder case. He said that he was stripped to his underwear and beaten with plastic bottles and truncheons to make him confess to the murders of a woman and her three children. The police officers did not inform him of his rights and his detention was not recorded. When he tried to complain he was allegedly beaten again.

Police in Kazakhstan are obliged to register a detention within three hours, but this does not always happen. Most of the reported instances of torture or other ill-treatment recorded by Amnesty International occur during those first hours after a person has been apprehended by police officers. In some cases detainees have not been registered for 36 hours or even longer. During this time, people held in unacknowledged detention have no



**Dmitri Tian with his wife and son. Dmitri Tian was tortured and ill-treated by police officers in Astana, Kazakhstan, and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment following an unfair trial on 16 June 2009.**

access to a lawyer, medical help or their families. Many confess to crimes they have not committed. Confessions such as these are then used as evidence in court, and in the case of Dmitri Tian, led to a sentence of 25 years' imprisonment.

### ACT NOW

**Call on the Minister of Internal Affairs to ensure that detainees' rights are respected, and to issue orders to stop holding individuals in unregistered detention.**

Please write to:  
Serik Baimagambetov  
Minister of Internal Affairs  
ul. Manasa, 4  
Astana 010000  
Kazakhstan  
Fax: +7 (7172) 71 43 33  
Email: usmvd@asdc.kz

## RELIGIOUS GROUP PERSECUTED IN INDONESIA

In December 2009, a group of people, some of whom claimed to be members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), raided a house in Tebet, South Jakarta, where members of the Ahmadiyya community were holding Friday prayers. According to witnesses, the police did nothing to stop the attackers and instead detained six Ahmadiyya “for their protection”.

The Ahmadiyya are a religious group who consider themselves a part of Islam, although many mainstream Muslim groups view them as not adhering to the accepted belief system. The Ahmadiyya claim 200,000 followers in Indonesia. They have come under attack in recent years because some groups view them as heretical. There has been

increasing pressure on the Indonesian government to act against the Ahmadiyya.

In June 2009 two men attempted to burn down an Ahmadiyya house of worship in Kebayoran Lama, South Jakarta, while Ahmadiyya followers were performing their dawn prayers. The following month, another Ahmadiyya place of worship in Tangerang, Banten, was partially burned by two unidentified people.

In 2008, the government issued a joint ministerial decree forbidding the Ahmadiyya from promoting their activities. The government has also used the Criminal Code to prosecute individuals from religious minorities for blasphemy, a crime punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.



**Vandalism at Ahmadiyya properties in Tangerang, Banten province, January 2009. The graffiti reads: “This is not a place of worship. Disband the heretic Ahmadiyya.”**

The police do not sufficiently protect the Ahmadiyya, and those who commit acts of violence against them often go unpunished. Until the Indonesian government protects the rights of minority religious groups, the attacks may continue.

### ACT NOW

**Call on the Indonesian authorities to:**

- **Protect and guarantee the right of the Ahmadiyya community to practice their religion free from fear, intimidation and persecution.**
- **Ensure that those who intimidate and use violence against members of the Ahmadiyya community and their places of worship are speedily brought to justice, and that victims are provided with reparations.**
- **Repeal all laws and regulations that restrict the right to freedom of religion as guaranteed in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Indonesia is a state party.**

Please write to:  
Gamawan Fauzi  
Home Affairs Minister  
Jl. Medan Merdeka Utara No. 7  
Central Jakarta, Indonesia  
Fax: +62 21 3851193  
Email: pusdatinkomtel@depdagri.go.id





## EASTERN CHAD: 'NO SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN'

**W**omen and girls from Sudan who have fled to Chad in search of safety continue to face rape and other assaults. The human rights abuses prevalent in Darfur still haunt them in eastern Chad, both inside and outside the refugee camps.

When refugee women and girls venture outside the camps for water, firewood or other necessities, they risk harassment and threats, physical attacks and rape. Some of the men responsible are members of opposition armed groups or Chadian security forces, some are bandits. Inside the camps, they face sexual assault by other refugees, including members of their own families, and in some cases, staff of humanitarian organizations.

Men who commit these crimes are rarely brought to justice,

perpetuating a culture of impunity. Chad's criminal justice system is weak, police are poorly trained and there are only a handful of courts, judges and prosecutors covering the whole of eastern Chad. In one case, a 13-year-old refugee girl in Farchana camp was raped by a Chadian nurse working in the camp. She became pregnant and gave birth in January 2009. The man initially accepted responsibility but later fled the area. Despite complaints filed with Chadian officials, no apparent action was taken against him or any effort made to track him down.

Violence against women has continued despite the deployment of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and the DIS – a Chadian police force supported and trained by MINURCAT with a mandate to provide security in



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**A woman collecting water, Farchana refugee camp, May 2009.**

and around the refugee camps. "The DIS spends a lot of time protecting themselves," said a refugee woman at Gaga refugee camp. "Even the UN soldiers have to protect them. No one seems to have much time to protect us."

The Chadian government is responsible for protecting people living on its territory, including refugees and internally displaced people. Steps must be taken by both the government and the international

community to protect women and girls more effectively. Individuals responsible for committing human rights violations in eastern Chad must be brought to justice and survivors and their families should be given treatment, support and assistance.

### ACT NOW

Sign a petition at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) calling on the Chadian President, Idriss Déby Itno, to ensure greater protection for refugee women and girls in eastern Chad.

## NO JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF POLICE ILL-TREATMENT IN FRANCE

**A**bdelhakim Ajimi, aged 22, suffocated to death after being restrained by police officers during his arrest in Grasse on 9 May 2008. Five of the police officers involved in the arrest were questioned on suspicion of "non-assistance to a person in danger" in March 2009.

At the time, the investigating judges did not question the two officers believed to have been directly responsible for Hakim Ajimi's death. The two officers were finally questioned on suspicion of "involuntary homicide" in February 2010, following an order by the Court of Appeal in Aix-en-Provence four months earlier. One of them was also questioned on suspicion of "non-

assistance to a person in danger". Hakim Ajimi's family is still waiting for a trial date.

On the same weekend, Lamba Soukouna, now 31 years old, was beaten by French riot police officers outside his apartment block in the Paris suburbs on the night of 8 May 2008. Lamba Soukouna suffers from sickle cell anaemia, a serious genetic illness, and is registered as partially disabled. He was arrested while making his way to the local police station and consequently spent three days in hospital because of his injuries and his lack of access to medication while in police custody. His appeal to the internal police body examining complaints against police officers was

closed without investigation. Two years on, Lamba Soukouna is still seeking justice.

Amnesty International's report, *Public Outrage: Police officers above the law in France* (EUR 21/003/2009), documented these and other cases of alleged ill-treatment by the French police. It highlighted the de facto impunity enjoyed by French police officers who are rarely brought to justice through prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigations. As the cases of Hakim Ajimi and Lamba Soukouna show, such internal and judicial investigations are often slow, irregular or reach an impasse.

In June 2009, the then Minister of the Interior Michèle Alliot-Marie promised to make public the reports of the internal police bodies investigating complaints against law enforcement officials. Her promise is yet to be put into practice.



© Private

**A memorial calling for justice for Abdelhakim Ajimi, France.**

### ACT NOW

Call on the French authorities to ensure that Hakim Ajimi's death and Lamba Soukouna's injuries are investigated independently and thoroughly, and that the perpetrators are brought to justice. You can find all the information you need at <http://snipr.com/uulxo> and <http://snipr.com/uuly2>

## DID YOU KNOW?

### POSTCARDS FOR YOU TO SIGN AND SEND

#### End whipping as punishment in Malaysia

The punishment for entering Malaysia without legal authorization includes whipping. Nearly 35,000 migrants were whipped by the authorities between 2002 and 2008, according to prison department records. Whipping is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, which human rights law prohibits. The practice is humiliating and inflicts intense pain and those whipped often carry scars, psychological as well as physical, for years. See insert to sign and send a postcard to the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

#### Protect migrants in Mexico

Thousands of undocumented migrants, including women and children, are falling victim to human rights abuses in Mexico. Beatings, abductions, rape and even murder are reportedly being committed by criminal gangs but there are also reports of abuses by state officials. Use our centre-page postcard to urge the Minister of the Interior to demonstrate publicly that the Mexican authorities will not tolerate such abuses.

### WORLD CUP 2010: TIME TO ACT

As excitement builds for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, Amnesty International brings you Stand-up United, a team of human rights defenders tackling abuses everywhere. The June-July edition of WIRE will focus on the World Cup, introduce the team and ask you and your friends to join them.

Stand-up United are 11 human rights defenders from around the world. They share one goal – equality, dignity and justice for all. Whether fighting for housing rights in Kenya, women's rights in Iran or migrants' rights in Mexico, the defenders do vital work in their communities. Many face intimidation, threats and even death but are able to continue knowing they have supporters around the globe.

In the June-July issue, the 11 defenders will speak about their work, their inspiration and how you can support them. There will be lots of actions you can take and ideas to help you organize your own Amnesty International football matches and other events to promote human rights. Bring your friends and neighbours together and join the defenders in our next WIRE!



*Right: pictures from the Burkina Faso maternal mortality caravan. Amnesty International delegates discussed issues around maternal mortality rates with locals as the caravan toured several villages in the Sahel region. The region has the highest rate of maternal death in the country. Burkina Faso, January 2010 (All images © Amnesty International)*





WHETHER IN A HIGH-PROFILE  
CONFLICT OR A FORGOTTEN  
CORNER OF THE GLOBE,  
**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**  
CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE AND  
FREEDOM FOR ALL AND SEEKS  
TO GALVANIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT  
TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Activists around the world have shown that it is possible to resist the dangerous forces that are undermining human rights. Be part of this movement. Combat those who peddle fear and hate.

- Join Amnesty International and become part of a worldwide movement campaigning for an end to human rights violations. Help us make a difference.

**Together we can make our voices heard.**

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International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street,  
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

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**‘HUMAN  
SOLIDARITY IS  
THE BEST SHIELD  
AGAINST  
AGGRESSION’**

**IDUVINA HERNÁNDEZ**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**

