

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

AI Index: POL 30/036/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 278
9 December 2003

Voluntary commitments by companies are not enough

The execution of the Ogoni 9 in Nigeria and the conduct of private security firms in Colombia convinced oil giants Shell and BP to take human rights concerns on board. Evidence linking diamonds from Sierra Leone with the reprehensible armed opposition group, the Revolutionary United Front, and its terror tactics of amputating the limbs of civilians, led the diamond industry to agree to a system of international certification to weed out conflict diamonds. Allegations of profiting from "sweatshops" forced apparel companies to look at human rights concerns.

Ten years ago, it was difficult to get companies to include human rights concerns into their work. Things are changing. Scrutiny of the activities of global business have led companies to adopt codes of conduct and 1,100 companies are participating in the UN Global Compact. However, much remains to be done. According to a survey, only 40 large companies have explicitly incorporated human rights into their corporate policy and many codes are vague and insufficient, says Irene Khan today in a feature on **news.amnesty**, in which she calls for a legal framework.

Read the full article on news.amnesty

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>