

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
PRESS RELEASE**

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## **ICONIC ARTISTS RELEASE ‘TOAST TO FREEDOM’ SONG FOR AMNESTY’S 50th ANNIVERSARY**

Amnesty International has released “Toast To Freedom,” a new and exclusive commemorative song dedicated to human rights activism around the world.

The song, an ambitious collaboration, is performed by nearly 50 artists, including Levon Helm, Kris Kristofferson, Carly Simon, Ewan McGregor, Donald Fagen, Eric Burdon, Taj Mahal, Marianne Faithfull, Jane Birkin, Rosanne Cash, and The Blind Boys of Alabama, among others.

“Toast To Freedom,” which celebrates Amnesty’s 50th anniversary and is being released to mark World Press Freedom Day (3 May), is written by veteran guitarist/producers Carl Carlton (Robert Palmer, Eric Burdon, Keb Mo) and Larry Campbell (Levon Helm Band, Bob Dylan, Elvis Costello). The initial recording was made at the famous Levon Helm Studios in Woodstock, NY, and producer/engineer Bob Clearmountain (The Who, Paul McCartney, Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen) produced the track, which was then sent out to dozens of artists, who added vocals.

Filmmaker Natalie Johns, known for her work with artists like Jay-Z, Peter Gabriel and The Rolling Stones, captured all stages of the international production, and a short “making-of” documentary also accompanies the music video.

“Toast To Freedom” was inspired by Carl Carlton, a longtime supporter of Amnesty, who suggested the collaboration with longtime music industry executive, activist, and entrepreneur Jochen Wilms as a commemorative project to mark the organisation’s 50th anniversary. Following Helms death on 19 April, Wilms said:

“Levon was one great soul. I am so grateful we got to work with him, his outstanding band and team in his barn in Woodstock. He was an inspiration and our muse.

“The song ‘Toast To Freedom’ is dedicated to Amnesty International but in a certain way is now a ‘Toast To Levon’ and a celebration for him as well.”

Bill Shipsey said of Levon Helm:

“On behalf of Amnesty International’s millions of members around the world I want to say how grateful we are to Levon Helm for his generous artistic contribution and support that will make a real difference to our life-saving work around the world.

“We in Amnesty owe him a huge debt. The best way to repay that debt to him is by continuing our work.”

Amnesty International Secretary General Salil Shetty said:

“Human rights are everybody’s business. I would like to thank all the people who gave their time to make this project happen. I hope ‘Toast To Freedom’ will become a major source of inspiration in the coming years.”

“Toast to Freedom” is available for purchase at [www.toasttofreedom.org](http://www.toasttofreedom.org) and via the usual online retailers worldwide, and proceeds will go to Amnesty’s human rights work.

Note to editors

In 1962, Amnesty evolved from a one-year campaign to free political prisoners - the inspiration of the British lawyer Peter Benenson outraged by the injustice he saw worldwide - into a global movement fighting for justice, freedom and human dignity.

“Toast to Freedom” is performed by:

Amy Helm

Angelique Kidjo

Arno

Axelle Red

Bertha Blades

The Blind Boys of Alabama

Carl Carlton

Carly Simon

Christine & The Queens

Christophe Willem

David D’Or

Donald Fagen

Emmanuel Jal

Eric Burdon

Essie Jain Ewan McGregor

Florent Pagny

Gentleman

Jane Birkin

Jerry “Wyzard” Seay

Jimmy Barnes

John Leventhal

JP Nataf

Keb Mo

Kris Kristofferson

Larry Campbell

Levon Helm

Mahalia Barnes

Marianne Faithfull

Matthew Houck Max Buskohl

Moses Mo

Nacho Campillo

Pascal Kravetz

Rosanne Cash

Shawn Mullins

Sir Samuel

Sonny Landreth

Sussan Deyhim

Taj Mahal

Teresa Williams

Vida Simon

Warren Haynes

Wayne P Sheehy

Zackary Alford

Executive producers: Bill Shipsey and Jochen Wilms  
Produced: Bob Clearmountain  
Co-produced and written: Carl Carlton and Larry Campbell

For more information:

Toast To Freedom (short version, 90sec): <http://youtu.be/y8ceCXVovTM>

Toast To Freedom (music video, full version): <http://youtu.be/EBLHwtGBUAE>

Toast To Freedom (making of): [http://youtu.be/zWNUulL\\_CsY](http://youtu.be/zWNUulL_CsY)

Toast To Freedom (interview, Salil Shetty): <http://youtu.be/XINPqGEm34Q>

MP3 links: [http://soundcloud.com/traacks/toast\\_to\\_freedom\\_radio\\_edit/s-fmSHf](http://soundcloud.com/traacks/toast_to_freedom_radio_edit/s-fmSHf) (radio edit, 3.57)

[http://soundcloud.com/traacks/toast\\_to\\_freedom/s-Bw9oA](http://soundcloud.com/traacks/toast_to_freedom/s-Bw9oA) (full version, 6.14)

<http://bit.ly/JcA1sY> (high-quality WAV radio edit for airplay)