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The human rights movement owes “a debt of gratitude” to Nelson Mandela

Responding to the sad news of Nelson Mandela’s death, Amnesty International paid tribute today to one of the world’s most visionary leaders in the fight to protect and promote human rights.

“As a world leader who refused to accept injustice, Nelson Mandela’s courage helped change our entire world,” said Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

“The death of Nelson Mandela is not just a loss for South Africa. It is a loss for people all over the world who are fighting for freedom, for justice and for an end to discrimination.”

"Nelson Mandela's commitment to human rights was epitomised by his unwavering resolve to stamp out racial inequality during apartheid, followed by his vital work in combating HIV/AIDS in South Africa. His legacy across Africa, and the world, will stand for generations."

“Nelson Mandela was a political prisoner, detained also for his conscience. He was a man who understood how exclusion of groups destroys the social fabric of a country by creating a politics of inequality. The human rights movement around the world owes Nelson Mandela a debt of gratitude. All of us who admired him must carry on his struggle.”

In November 2006, Amnesty International declared Nelson Mandela an ‘Ambassador of Conscience’ in recognition of his work over many years of speaking out against human rights abuses not just in South Africa but around the world.

To see a video of Nelson Mandela prepared by Amnesty International’s audiovisual team click here http://youtu.be/Dk5_epATpaI