

[front cover page]

A life free from fear

[inside front cover]

and from want

[BOX]

Welcome to your wire

Please let us know if you like it

- * Have you used the actions?
- * Have you shared the information with anyone?
- * What would you like to see more of in future issues?
- * And is there anything you would like to see less of?
- * 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?

Send all comments and suggestions to:

Wire

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or email us on yourwire@amnesty.org

[END BOX]

Amnesty International is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign on human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

Amnesty International is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion – funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

First published in 2008 by Amnesty International Publications

www.amnesty.org © Amnesty International Publications 2008

Index: NWS 21/009/2008

ISSN: 1472-443X

Printed by Banbury Litho, Banbury, United Kingdom on Revive 50:50 FSC/-post-consumer waste paper.

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Cover caption and copyright: Cover photo: Children jumping into the sea, Malaysia, won an ‘honorary mention’ in the UNEP/Canon competition ‘Focus On Your World’. The contest was held

from June 1999 to April 2000 and encouraged people of all ages from all countries to submit photographs reflecting the environmental health of the planet, and the interlinkages between the physical, social, economic and spiritual aspects of life on Earth. Published in consultation with UNICEF, on use of images of children.

© Ricky Teoh/UNEP/Still Pictures

ADAM ID: 24024

Inside cover caption and copyright: This page: A container serves as home to one of the Romani families at the settlement of Letanovce, Slovakia, 2007. © Amnesty International

ADAM ID: 19455

[\[page 1 – Contents\]](#)

Happy birthday!

In the 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, much has been achieved and much remains to be done. Get involved in our Fire Up campaign and find out about our Small Places concert tour celebrating those achievements. Don't forget to carry your human rights passport enclosed free with this edition – pages 2-5.

Defend the defenders

2008 marks the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Pages 15-19 detail why their work is as essential as ever and their freedom to carry it out must be protected.

Wire goes digital

Visit the online livewire blog space to get the latest comment and news on Amnesty International events and actions from around the globe – page 6 shows you how.

KEEPING ACTIVE

In every issue a page will be dedicated to top tips and ideas for taking action. This month showcases activists' work throughout 2008, on PAGE 14.

Worldwide appeals act now see pages 5, 8, 19 and 20

Spread the word

The centre pages contain a double-sided poster for you to pull out and display in your workplaces, colleges, community centres or homes. This issue's action poster calls on the new US President to show his commitment to human rights.

Q&A

Sister Helen Prejean, anti-death penalty activist and author of *Dead Man Walking*, talks to Amnesty International members about life, death and dignity on PAGE 13.

SPOTLIGHT

Pages 7, 8 and 20 throw a spotlight on key research, country news and appeals. This issue looks at attacks on Indigenous peoples in Bolivia, migrants in Saudi Arabia and Greece, and the death penalty in Nigeria.

[\[pages 2-4 – 60th Anniversary of UDHR\]](#)

Yours to enjoy, yours to protect

All people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. This guiding principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lives strong in the hearts and minds of millions of people, as the Declaration celebrates its 60th birthday.

In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) set out for the first time the fundamental rights which allow all of us to live in dignity; to which everyone is entitled; and for which all of us must fight.

Its 30 articles cover the economic, civil, social, cultural and political areas of our lives. They range from the rights to life and security

– such as water, food, health care, shelter and freedom from torture – to those that provide full participation in that life, such as freedom from discrimination, freedom of expression, education, work, association and religion.

They cannot be partitioned or diluted. Their meaning is in their indivisibility. Nobody can arbitrarily choose which rights to allow people to access. They are universal. When any of them are threatened, they all are.

In the six decades since the Declaration was signed by the international community, the world has undergone dramatic changes. Some regions have been able to fly with the vision further than others. In May 1948, several months before the adoption of the UDHR, the Inter-American Conference adopted the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the world's first general human rights instrument. The Americas region's crucial contribution to international human rights has been overshadowed in the intervening years by the military rule that dominated much of the region. From the 1960s to the mid-1980s many Latin American countries endured years of military government characterized by widespread and systematic human rights violations. The end of military rule and the return to civilian, constitutionally elected governments have seen an end to the pattern of widespread and systematic enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and torture of political opponents. Today, most constitutions in the region guarantee fundamental rights and most countries in the region have ratified key international human rights treaties.

Representatives of several Middle Eastern governments participated in the negotiations to adopt the UDHR. Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria were among the 48 states with the vision to adopt the Declaration. Yet, the Middle East region has lagged Africa, the Americas and Europe in developing effective legal frameworks and enforcement systems for the promotion and protection of human rights. Indeed, it was only on 15 March 2008 that an Arab Charter on Human Rights took effect.

The Charter has positive features that enlarge on the rights enshrined in international human rights treaties, but it also has severely negative aspects – such as failing to outlaw executions of children – that states could seek to use to undermine their obligations under binding global standards.

Many of the Asia-Pacific states that adopted the UDHR in 1948 had recently achieved independence from colonial rule. For them, a global commitment to a world where all are “free and equal in dignity and rights” held special significance. “Freedom from fear and want” were equally powerful aspirations for the citizens of the many Asia-Pacific nations that joined the UN thereafter. On the face of it, “freedom from want” appeared to find some vindication in Asia's subsequent, explosive emergence as a powerful economic force. Despite disparities between individual economies in the region Asia has, on the whole, seen its wealth increase faster than any other region in the world since 1960. But Asia remains the only region that does not have an overarching human rights instrument. However, in a major development in November 2007, the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) marked the Association's 40th anniversary by signing their first formal charter – including a commitment to establish a human rights body for the sub-region.

Within a decade of its continent's devastation by the Second World War, western Europe had laid the foundations of what would become a pan-European regional institutional architecture – set to create a human rights system unrivalled elsewhere in the world. In that time, the Council of Europe drew up the first international legal instrument to protect human rights and created the European Court of Human Rights to enforce it.

The economic communities established in the 1950s evolved into the European Union – embracing new member states from the former Communist bloc – and into a self-proclaimed “union of values”, aspiring to place human rights at the heart of policy. However, in the sixth decade since the

Declaration, we see states that have entered voluntarily into such commitments also voluntarily evading their obligations, attacking and eroding human rights, and failing to find the political will needed to address key abuses.

Sub-Saharan Africa was only represented in 1948 by Liberia, Ethiopia and South Africa, which introduced apartheid in 1948 and abstained during the vote for the UDHR. The decolonization process and the end of apartheid in South Africa have been accompanied by institution building on a national level and increased respect for the rule of law. Many sub-Saharan African countries now have active civil societies and diverse independent news media. Over the decades, the human rights framework in the Africa region has developed through various regional human rights treaties and institutions. In 1986 the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights entered into force and the 20th anniversary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was celebrated in 2007. In July 2008 the AU Assembly adopted the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights (African Court). However, in order to make the African Court effective, states should make a declaration accepting the competence of the African Court to receive cases from individuals and non-governmental organizations.

To read the UDHR in full and to sign it, go to www.everyhumanhasrights.org/universal-declaration/read-it

Photo captions and copyright: Residents of Bhopal celebrate the announcement that the Supreme Court had ordered remaining compensation money for victims of the 1984 gas disaster to be paid out, 19 July 2004, India. ADAM ID: 6602

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[BOX]

Key moments of the last 60 years

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations

1951 convention relating to the status of refugees is adopted

1961 Peter Benenson launches an "appeal for amnesty" with the publication of "the forgotten prisoners" in the observer newspaper, later published in various newspapers around the world. So begins Amnesty International

1962 an Amnesty International observer attends the trial of Nelson Mandela

1964 UN grants Amnesty International consultative status

1966 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination is adopted

1969 UNESCO grants Amnesty International consultative status

1975 UN unanimously adopts a declaration against torture

1977 Amnesty International awarded the Nobel peace prize

1978 Amnesty International awarded the UN human rights prize

1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is adopted

1981 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women enters into force

1984 convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is adopted

1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted

1995 the fourth world conference on women adopts the Beijing declaration and platform for action confirming that “women’s rights are human rights”

1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is adopted

1998 International Criminal Court is adopted by the UN

1998 UN adopts Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

2006 first ever UN resolution to commence work on an Arms Trade Treaty with overwhelming member support

2007 UN votes favourably for a moratorium on the death penalty

2007 UN member states adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

2008 147 UN member states support resolution to start work on Arms Trade Treaty framework

[BOX – ACT NOW]

Sign up!

This issue of *Wire* comes with a copy of your personal human rights passport. In holding this passport, you are standing up for universal, indivisible human rights. It affirms your conviction that human rights abuses anywhere are the concern of people everywhere, and expresses your commitment to harness the power of individuals to take action for justice and equality. The passport expresses your solidarity in creating a world in which every person can realize their human rights and it will help you carry the UDHR message of hope to every region of the world in its 60th anniversary year.

You can download more passports and share them with other human rights defenders, friends, relatives and activists. Visit: www.amnesty.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights-anniversary/the-passport

[END BOX]

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[BOX – ACT NOW]

Fire Up!

“It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”

The UDHR has enabled remarkable progress in human rights, improving the lives of many around the world. And it inspired the founding of Amnesty International, which now has more than 2 million supporters worldwide.

Amnesty International’s vision is for every person to enjoy all of the human rights enshrined in the

UDHR, and in the other international human rights standards and instruments that have evolved since. Every human has rights. That is the essence of our humanity. It places on each of us the duty to stand up, not just for our own rights but also for those of others – and to help turn the vision of the UDHR into a reality.

The rights enshrined in the UDHR will only become a reality for all if we continue to demonstrate our outrage when they are violated or abused. Despite all the achievements of the last 60 years, human rights abuses continue to devastate millions of lives. Acts of genocide and torture persist while their perpetrators often go unpunished. The death penalty remains in use in 60 countries despite the growing consensus for abolition. Hunger, homelessness and preventable disease continue to destroy people's right to live in dignity. Human rights defenders are being persecuted and attacked. Governments undermine human rights for political gain.

Amnesty International members will be creating a series of illuminations in the run-up to and on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2008. You can join them in gathering in hundreds of places all over the globe to make the shape of the Amnesty International candle and light sparklers as part of a mass demonstration (above). Show your solidarity with other people who are committed to making human rights a reality for all. These actions on Human Rights Day will bring together and strengthen the work of Amnesty International members the world over. To download the toolkit that shows you how you can get involved, go to: www.amnesty.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights-anniversary/fire-up

Photo copyright: Amnesty International ADAM ID: ???
[END BOX – ACT NOW]

[BOX]

SMALL PLACES

Amnesty International's Small Places tour began on 10 September at the Hard Rock Café in London, UK, and continues through to Human Rights Day on 10 December 2008. Celebrating 60 years since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the tour consists of more than 700 concerts held across 50 countries, including Afghanistan, Bolivia, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

This is not the first time that Amnesty International has held a major musical event on the anniversary of the Declaration. The Human Rights Now! tour celebrated the 40th anniversary in 1988 with 20 concerts on five continents. Over 1 million people attended the concerts.

To find out where concerts are taking place and learn more about the Small Places tour, go to www.amnesty.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights-anniversary/small-places

[END BOX]

[WWA]

Honduras

Fears of impunity after convicted police officers escape

Environmental activists Heraldo Zúñiga and Roger Iván Cartagena were members of the organization Environmentalist Movement of Olancho (MAO), which campaigns against illegal logging and deforestation in Olancho, Honduras. On 20 December 2006, they were shot dead by police officers in an execution-style killing.

In May 2006, Heraldo Zúñiga had expressed fears for his safety after receiving death threats following his exposure of illegal logging in the Salamá region. On 20 December, he and Roger Iván Cartagena were driving through the village of Guarizama in Olancho department when they were stopped by police. According to eyewitnesses, the officers forced them out of their vehicle and ordered them to stand against a wall. Approximately 40 shots were fired at the two men, killing them instantly.

The trial of four police officers allegedly involved in the shooting commenced on the first anniversary of the killings. On 1 July 2008 all four were found guilty of murder. However, they

were not transferred immediately to prison, but held in military custody pending sentencing. From here, three of the convicted police officers escaped. Their whereabouts remain unknown, and Amnesty International is not aware of any investigations into their escape.

In the months following the shooting of Heraldo Zúñiga and Roger Iván Cartagena, other MAO members reported threats and intimidation. With three of the convicted officers still missing, there are concerns for the safety of MAO members. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has requested that the Honduran state protect MAO members; however, no adequate protection has yet been provided by the authorities. The organization's work has been severely restricted as members have been forced to curtail their work for fear of attacks.

Please write, calling on the Honduran authorities to ensure that the three escaped police officers guilty of the murders of Heraldo Zúñiga and Roger Iván Cartagena are recaptured urgently. Urge the authorities to provide adequate, regular and effective protection for MAO members in accordance with their own wishes and in line with the request made by the IACHR.

Send appeals to:

Presidente de la República
Sr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales
Casa Presidencial
Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo,
Palacio José Cecilio del Valle
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax +504 2393298
Salutation: Dear President

Photo captions and copyright: David Zúñiga, father of Heraldo Zúñiga, 2007

© Amnesty International

ADAM ID: 18627

[page 6 – LIVEWIRE]

Livewire is the new blogosphere on www.amnesty.org. From 17 November, you can catch up with what people around the movement are doing, watch footage and listen to audio clips from actions, missions, high-level meetings and events.

www.amnesty.org/livewire

En route to Chile

I'm of a generation for whom the 11th of September was a turning point long before 9/11 (of 2001). Only months after I was born in 1973, the coup d'état took place in Chile, forever changing the psyche for many, not just in Latin America, but beyond.

I re-read Gabriel García Márquez's tale of "La Aventura de Miguel Littín clandestino en Chile" – the story of the reknowned Chilean film director Miguel Littín who was on a list of 5,000 people who lived in forced exile during the Pinochet regime. Miguel Littín risked it all to go back to Chile in 1985 to film the reality of life under the military dictatorship and García Márquez's reportage makes appropriate reading on the plane from São Paulo to Santiago.

To continue reading "En route to Chile" online, go to www.amnesty.org/livewire

Featured online

"The atmosphere is good-humoured, loud and celebratory, the groups of counter-demonstrators at either end of the street may be visible and loud, but they're not raining on our parade."

Amnesty International activists from around 30 countries gathered in Latvia to join Riga Pride 2008.

Videos

Highlights from the Beijing Olympics campaign, which called on the Chinese government to deliver a positive and lasting human rights legacy for the Beijing Olympics, are now available to watch on Livewire.

[page 7 – Research Spotlight]

‘Waiting for the hangman’ – poverty and the death penalty in Nigeria

More than 720 men and 11 women are under sentence of death in Nigeria’s prisons. All of them are “waiting for the hangman”. All of them are poor.

Some death row prisoners were arrested when they went to a police station because they knew a suspect or had witnessed a crime. Many said the police rounded them up and then demanded money for their release. Sometimes police asked for money for fuel: without it they could not visit witnesses or check alibis.

The majority of death row prisoners were convicted on the basis of confessions. Overstretched and under-resourced, the Nigerian police routinely use torture to extract confessions as a substitute for thorough and impartial investigation of the crime. Some prisoners had no lawyer at all – others said that their lawyer failed to argue their case. The court should appoint a lawyer when necessary in death penalty cases, but Nigeria’s legal aid system is under-funded and inadequate. Most death row trials last between five and 10 years. Some appeals have been pending for more than 20 years. At least 130 prisoners have been on death row for more than 10 years and one prisoner has spent 24 years under sentence of death.

About 80 death row prisoners were denied the right to appeal, a clear violation of international human rights law. Such is the chaos within the criminal justice system that others cannot appeal because their case file has been lost. Even when it comes to seeking pardon, prisoners say that those who cannot afford to pay prison officials never see their names on the list put forward for consideration.

In further defiance of international law, at least 40 child offenders are under sentence of death: one was just 13 years old at the time of the crime.

ACT NOW

* Sign and send the attached postcard, calling for the release of Patrick Okoroafor, who was 14 years old when he was arrested for robbery, a crime for which he was sentenced to death despite having an alibi.

* Send a greetings card to Patrick Okoroafor in prison:

Patrick Okoroafor, Aba Prison, PMB 7020, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria

* Write to the President of Nigeria, calling for a moratorium on executions:

President Umaru Yar’Adua, Office of the President, Aso Rock, Abuja, Nigeria.

Picture caption and copyright: A father takes final leave of his son, convicted of armed robbery.

© Drum/Camera Press London

ADAM ID: 23547

Poor migrants more likely to be executed in Saudi Arabia

At least eight people were executed by the Saudi Arabian authorities in the first three weeks of October 2008. The killings came immediately after the end of Ramadan, during which the government imposed a moratorium on executions. There are serious concerns that many other lives are now in immediate danger.

Sheikh Mastan, aged 30, and Hamza Abu Bakir, aged 47, both Indian nationals, are at risk of execution by the Saudi Arabian authorities. They were convicted on charges of drug possession and sentenced to death in June 2006. The two men had no lawyer during their trial, and are now appealing against their case. This appeal is their last hope.

The rate of executions in Saudi Arabia has risen sharply in the last two years. There were at least 158 executions in the country in 2007, a fourfold increase from 2006, and at least 71 people were

executed in the first eight months of 2008. Death sentences are often imposed at the end of grossly unfair trial process. Many of the victims are sentenced after being convicted of non-violent or vaguely worded offences in summary trials and receive little protection against miscarriage of justice. Those who are executed are usually beheaded, often in public.

More than half of all those known to have been executed in the past 23 years were foreign nationals, mostly from poor and developing countries in Asia and Africa. They are much less likely to receive a pardon than Saudi Arabian citizens and their trials are conducted in Arabic but often without the aid of adequate interpretation facilities. Some are not even aware that they have been sentenced to death at the end of their trials – in some cases, those condemned to die learned of their sentence of death only on the morning of their execution.

Women, both foreign migrants and Saudi Arabian citizens, are also particularly vulnerable to discrimination. According to Amnesty International's records, at least 40 women have been put to death in Saudi Arabia since 1990. At least 40 per cent of them were convicted of offences that had no lethal consequences and the majority of them were migrant workers from developing countries. To learn more, go to www.amnesty.org and type in: Affront to justice: Death penalty in Saudi Arabia or MDE 23/027/2008. To take action, sign the postcard inside this issue of Wire and send it off.

[BOX]

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 37(a)

'No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age'

* Ratified by Nigeria, 19 April 1991: There are at least 40 death row inmates in Nigeria whose age at the time of the crime was between 13 and 17.

* Acceded to by Saudi Arabia, 26 January 1996:

at least two child offenders were executed in Saudi Arabia in 2007.

[END BOX]

[page 8 – Research Spotlight]

Migrant children detained in Greece

Countries around the world regularly detain asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants within their territories purely for immigration purposes and often in contravention of international human rights law and standards. Amnesty International's campaign aims to put an end to the unlawful use of detention against migrants and asylum-seekers. It calls on states to exercise less restrictive measures and to always avoid detaining unaccompanied children.

The campaign is currently protesting against the detention of 160 unaccompanied migrant children by the Greek authorities on the island of Lesbos. The children, some of whom may be refugees, are held in the Pagani detention centre in Lesbos in degrading and inhumane conditions. They sleep on the floor in flooded and overcrowded rooms and are very rarely allowed to go outside. Their access to lawyers is limited.

ACT NOW

Call on the Greek authorities to release the children and ensure that they are given alternative and appropriate care. Please emphasize that the detention of these children contravenes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as Greek Presidential Decree 96/2008.

Send appeals to:

Prokopis Pavlopoulos

Minister of Interior

4, P. Kanellopoulou

10177 Athens, Greece
Fax: 0030 210 3641048 / 0030 210 6929764

[WWA]

Myanmar

Pro-democracy activists await trial

Over a year since the violent crackdown on protesters in Myanmar, many of those arrested are still in detention. Activists Htay Kywe, Mie Mie and Zaw Htet Ko Ko are members of a pro-democracy group, the 88 Generation Students, named after the 1988 uprising. They were involved in initial protest marches in August 2007 against state-imposed fuel price increases, but were forced into hiding as the authorities launched a search for those thought to be leading the protests.

On 13 October 2007 Htay Kywe, Mie Mie and Zaw Htet Ko Ko were arrested in the former capital, Yangon. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience and believes that they are at risk of torture. Htay Kywe and Mie Mie face a total of nine charges; Zaw Htet Ko Ko is facing six. At least 32 others arrested in the crackdown are on trial with them. The “crimes” they are charged with include unlawful association, distributing written material without the authorization of the official censor, and criticism of the government. The latter charge carries a sentence of up to 20 years’ imprisonment.

The defendants have made three demands to the court: that they are not handcuffed when taken into court; that journalists be allowed in court; and that the trial be public. The authorities have ignored these demands.

Please write, calling on Brigadier General Kyaw Hsan, Information Minister, to ensure that Htay Kywe, Mie Mie and Zaw Htet Ko Ko are released immediately and unconditionally. Ask that while they remain in detention they are given access to necessary medical treatment and to lawyers of their own choosing, and are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

Send appeals to:

Brigadier General Kyaw Hsan
Minister of Information
Ministry of Information
Bldg. (7), Naypyitaw, Union of Myanmar
Email: Media.moi@mptmail.net.mm
Fax: +95 67 412 363
Salutation: Brigadier General Kyaw Hsan

Photo captions and copyright: Htay Kywe, Mie Mie and Zaw Htet Ko Ko © Private (all three)
ADAM ID: 19732, 19798, 19806

[BOX]

Amnesty International recent reports available from www.amnesty.org/library

Civilians in the line of fire: the Georgia-Russia conflict

Index: EUR 04/005/2008

More civilians were killed than soldiers in the five-day war in August 2008 for control of South Ossetia, Georgia. This new report details serious violations of the laws of war during the conflict and in its aftermath.

Policing the candlelight protests in South Korea

Index: ASA 25/008/2008

The lifting of a ban on US beef imports to South Korea sparked demonstrations in Seoul in early May 2008. This report examines the policing of the protests and key areas of concern, including

unnecessary or excessive use of force; arbitrary arrest and detention; a lack of adequate police training and accountability.

Connecting human rights in Viet Nam

Index: ASA 41/003/2008

In Viet Nam, those who seek to promote human rights are often perceived to be against the state and are threatened, harassed and imprisoned. This Information Sheet describes how human rights defenders have sought to work together over the internet.

‘Leave us in peace’: Targeting civilians in Colombia’s internal armed conflict

Index: AMR 23/023/2008

The lives of millions of Colombians continue to be devastated by a conflict which has now lasted for more than 40 years. Peace remains elusive and UN proposed solutions have been ignored by government and guerrilla groups alike.

Fatal Insecurity: Attacks on aid workers and rights defenders in Somalia

Index: AFR 52/016/2008

In the middle of a humanitarian emergency, dozens of humanitarian workers, peace activists and human rights defenders have been killed in targeted violence that has forced many organizations to suspend programmes and withdraw staff.

No pride in silence: Countering violence in the family in Armenia

Index: EUR 54/004/2008

Thousands of women in Armenia are regularly subjected to violence within their families, but domestic violence is not a crime in Armenian law.

[END BOX]

[pages 9-12 – Pull-out posters: Index AMR 51/118/2008]

[page 13 – Human Rights Talk]

Q&A – Sister Helen Prejean

This issue, Wire meets Sister Helen Prejean, a Roman Catholic nun and a leading anti-death penalty activist. She is the founder of Survive, a victims’ advocacy group in New Orleans, USA, and counsellor to people on death row and to families of murder victims. Her book, *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1993. A longer interview is available online at www.amnesty.org

Q What sparked your interest in human rights?

A In the early 1980s I lived with poor African Americans. It was another America. I saw the suffering and injustice, and got an invitation to visit Patrick Sonnier [the subject of *Dead Man Walking*] on death row. So I wrote to him. He wrote back. I visited him. Two and a half years later I’m telling him to look at my face when they kill him in the electric chair. It just took my life and turned it inside out. I had been a witness to state killing so I had to tell the story. I also became involved with the victim’s family and saw how the death penalty had nothing to do with their healing.

Q What do you think are the main challenges in the struggle against human rights abuses?

A That most people don’t think the death penalty is a human rights abuse. They think of it as a just punishment or necessary for the protection of society. So you have to take people with you – stand with them in their outrage [over the crime] but take them into the process of what happens [with executions], including what happens to the guards who have to do the killing.

Q If you could change one thing, what would it be?

A Abolish the death penalty. By abolishing it we would also abolish a lot of the racism that is

involved, the assault on poor people and [the idea that] we can solve social problems by using violence.

Q What does Amnesty International mean to you?

A I learned from Amnesty International that human rights are inalienable, they cannot be alienated or prized away from people – they are not given by governments to people for good behaviour and can't be taken away from them for bad behaviour. Amnesty International became my teacher – far quicker than my own Catholic Church which [at that point] had a compromised position on the death penalty.

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

A Begin in very simple ways. Write a letter to someone. If we let that rose fully unfurl it will change our whole life because it is about standing up for the dignity of each person. It is not so much they who need to be changed. It is us. It will teach us we have one life – and it counts.

[Pull quote]

“Human rights are inalienable, they cannot be prized away from people – they are not given by governments for good behaviour and cannot be taken away for bad behaviour.”

[END Pull Quote]

Photo copyright: Amnesty International

ADAM ID: 23860

[page 14 – Action page]

2008 was a good year for activism and Amnesty International members have worked hard campaigning for human rights in many different parts of the world.

Throughout 2009, this page will regularly keep you up to date on key actions and events you can get involved in. There'll be top tips and advice on setting up your own campaign activities and members will share their experience and knowledge to help make your campaign a success. From starting a petition to organizing demonstrations; watch this space.

Photo caption and copyright: Demonstrations and events held throughout the world during 2008 included (clockwise from top right) Close Guantánamo, Brussels, Belgium; ending enforced disappearance in Pakistan, London, UK; demonstration for Tibet in Kathmandu, Nepal; Close Guantánamo concert in Istanbul, Turkey; Gay Pride in Paris, France; solidarity with the people of Kenya in Kampala, Uganda; Aerial Art for Beijing Olympics, Taipei City, Taiwan; and Riga Pride, Latvia. All photos © Amnesty International

ADAM IDs (clockwise from top right): 20579, 23291, 21475, 20645, 23638, 21153, 23312, 22281

[pages 15-19 – Human Rights Defenders]

Defend the defenders

On the 10th anniversary of the Universal declaration on Human Rights Defenders, it is as important as ever to demand their protection.

Different roads to rights

Human rights defenders strive to bring about the profound social changes needed to fulfil the radical vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). A vision of a world in which all are treated as “equal in dignity and worth” and where “all enjoy freedom from want and freedom from fear”. Defenders are committed to non-violent engagement, and to respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The ways in which defenders promote and protect these rights are as diverse as the defenders themselves. Some do grassroots campaigning, advocacy and lobbying of governmental or international institutions or build the capacity of local communities to understand and claim their rights. Others disseminate information on human rights abuses, teach human rights principles, or

represent victims and survivors of human rights violations in their fight for justice. Defenders frequently uphold human rights by exercising them, such as journalists in Colombo, Sri Lanka, taking to the streets in November 2007 to demand that the government safeguard freedom of expression.

Defenders under attack

Ten years ago, UN member states acknowledged the legitimacy of defenders and the need to protect their work by adopting the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. It was recognition that universal rights will only become a reality when those who fight for them are free from attack. Yet, human rights defenders continue to face intimidation, arrest, torture and even death. They are at risk because they expose the gap between states' commitment to human rights in theory and their compliance in practice – they uncover violations, subject them to public scrutiny and press for those responsible to be held to account. This often means challenging the status quo and confronting vested interests, whether it is the interests of a particular government, or the military, economic or political elites that sustain them. As a result, defenders can find themselves at risk. Intimidation takes many forms, from continual low-level harassment and subtle attempts to disparage their work, to wrongful imprisonment, torture and even murder. Over the decades, a range of repressive tactics have been used by governments of every political hue to silence human rights defenders. Patterns of repression vary over time and across continents. In Latin America, for example, “disappearances” and death squad killings replaced politically motivated imprisonment in the 1970s and 80s as favoured tactics for suppressing dissenting voices.

An evolving rights agenda

The concept of human rights is dynamic and constantly evolving as courageous and visionary defenders seek to challenge traditional interpretations of human rights. Those living in slavery, workers unprotected against exploitation, women denied the vote, Indigenous peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and the disabled have all fought for inclusion and enriched and transformed our understanding of human rights as a result.

In recent decades, defenders have brought human rights into the sphere of the home and the community through the struggle to stop violence against women. They have positioned universal access to primary education and to life-saving anti-retroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS as fundamental entitlements rather than services conditional on economic growth or charitable benevolence. Defenders have pushed for multinational corporations to be held accountable for their actions – making powerful enemies and exposing themselves to ever-greater risk by questioning the global distribution of wealth.

This evolution of human rights continues with new generations of defenders. Those alerting us to the impact of climate change on life on the planet, or to the implications of scientific advances on human life, are already pointing to some of the issues that may increasingly feature on the human rights agenda of the future.

Defenders not only battle to expand and enrich our understanding of human rights, but in recent years they have also had to strive to preserve long-recognized ethical values at the heart of the human rights framework. For example, the unacceptability of torture, and the right of everyone – no matter what they are alleged to have done – to be treated with dignity and fairness by the state. Some governments, particularly in Europe and the USA, argue that “the rules of the game have changed” since the attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001 and subsequent attacks in other countries. They have questioned the extent to which human rights considerations should take precedence over the protection of their populations. This has led to attempts to justify torture and other ill-treatment in the name of fighting terrorism, and to thousands of suspects being held indefinitely without charge or trial, for example in Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Guantánamo and other “war on terror” detention sites.

The idea of human rights may have achieved near-universal endorsement, but it cannot be taken for

granted that their legitimacy will always be recognized.

As we approach the anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, we must reinforce the need for the principles defined 10 years ago to be made a reality through legal and policy initiatives that protect and promote the work of defenders. We can all play an invaluable role in upholding human rights by demanding the protection of human rights defenders.

[Pull quote]

“Universal rights will only become a reality when those who fight for them are free from attack.”

[END Pull Quote]

[CASE]

Nigeria

Uju Agamoh

“The aim is not to teach people what they should do, but to make them aware of the potential within each one of us.”

Uju Agamoh

The human rights violations experienced by Nigeria’s prisoners compelled Uju Agamoh to set up, and become Executive Director of, the NGO Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) in 1994. PRAWA defends and promotes the rights of prisoners and helps them integrate back into the community. For example, people suffering from mental illness who have committed no crime are regularly incarcerated as “civil lunatics”. In 2007, PRAWA secured the relocation of 57 mentally ill prisoners to hospital.

Central to PRAWA’s work is the delivery of workshops to the judiciary, the police and prison services to help them apply human rights standards in their everyday work. Uju Agamoh has facilitated the training of over 2,500 prison officers and developed teams to carry out prison-based training on human rights.

Uju Agamoh is also the Special Rapporteur on Prisons of the Nigerian Human Rights Commission and sits on the Committee that reviews prisoners’ cases. Uju Agamoh’s future plans include training and advocacy on gender sensitivity within the Nigerian criminal justice system.

[END CASE]

[CASE]

Thailand

Somchai Homlaor

For nearly 25 years, the name Somchai Homlaor has been synonymous with the defence of human rights in Thailand. He began in October 1973 by leading mass student protests demanding democracy and human rights while studying for a law degree. Three years later, he again led protests and was detained for 10 months on spurious charges, after which he sought refuge in the northern Thai jungle for three years.

In 1986, he was forced to flee Thailand after working with Amnesty International to gather evidence about a Cambodian refugee who had been tortured by the Thai military. Throughout the 1990s he founded, led, or was a prominent member of nearly every major human rights movement in Thailand, including as Secretary-General of the Campaign for Popular Democracy which spearheaded the pro-democracy movement during the “Black May” protests in 1992.

Today, Somchai Homlaor applies his experience and legal expertise to a wide range of human rights groups. Among these, he serves as president of the Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF), an NGO that focuses on the armed conflict between Muslim insurgents and largely Buddhist security forces in southern Thailand.

[END CASE]

[CASE]

Ecuador

Esther Landetta

Esther Landetta is a leading member of two community-based organizations concerned about the effects of irregular mining activities on their communities' health and livelihoods. Esther Landetta has been at the forefront of efforts by The Assembly for the Defence of Our Rivers Gala, Chico, Tenguel and River Siete, in the Guayas province, to document and publicly denounce the pollution of these rivers. Esther Landetta is also a member of the Women Defenders of the Pachamama Front, where women develop skills to participate in human rights forums.

As a result of lobbying by Esther Landetta, the local authorities carried out an official inquiry into the effects of mining activities and published a report into river contamination in April 2008. Since then, threats against her have intensified. On 12 July 2008, Esther Landetta was warned that hit-men had been hired to kill her. She and her children went into hiding, and are currently receiving official protection under the National Programme for Victims and Witnesses. The Public Prosecutor's Office has opened an investigation into the threats. To date it has not progressed. She is unable to return home because of fears for her safety and that of her family.

Worldwide appeal

Please write to the Ecuadorian authorities, reminding them human rights defenders must be allowed to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals, as set out in the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Urge the authorities to protect Esther Landetta and immediately progress the investigation into threats against her, bringing those responsible to justice.

Dr. Gustavo Jalkh

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Av. Amazonas y Atahualpa

Quito – Pichincha, Ecuador

Fax: +593 2 2464 914

[END CASE]

[CASE]

Libya

Fathi el-Jahmi

Fathi el-Jahmi, a trained civil engineer, has been detained since March 2004, after he criticized Libyan leader Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi and called for political reform during interviews with international media. Fathi el-Jahmi had been previously detained between 2002 and 2004 for peacefully expressing the view that reform within Libya would not take place without legal and political change.

Since July 2007, Fathi el-Jahmi has been kept in custody at the Tripoli Medical Centre – he suffers from heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. Security officers refuse to return his passport and keep his family under close surveillance. An independent medical examination confirmed he could be treated as an outpatient and there is no medical justification to confine him to the Tripoli Medical Centre.

Worldwide appeal

Please write to the Libyan authorities, calling for Fathi el-Jahmi's immediate and unconditional release. Urge the authorities to return his passport and ensure that he can seek medical treatment of his own choice in Libya or abroad.

Mustafa Abdeljalil

Justice Minister

Secretary of the General People's Committee for Justice,

Secretariat of the General People's Committee for Justice

Tripoli, Libya

Fax: +218 21 4805427

Salutation: Your Excellency
[END CASE]

[CASE]

Turkey

Orhan Kemal Cengiz

Orhan Kemal Cengiz has defended human rights in Turkey for 15 years. He is a lawyer, representing victims of human rights violations from across the political spectrum, and a newspaper columnist. He is a founding member of a number of human rights organizations including Amnesty International Turkey. Orhan Kemal Cengiz currently serves as the president of the Human Rights Agenda Association, established in 2003 to defend human rights in Turkey at the national and international level.

Orhan Kemal Cengiz has been threatened and intimidated on a number of occasions, most recently because of his legal work on behalf of three men killed in an attack at a Christian publishing house in April 2007. His request for a bodyguard was granted by the authorities earlier this year and an investigation into the threats continues. He may also face an investigation and prosecution for “denigration of the state’s military or security apparatus” because of an article he wrote questioning the role of the military in Turkish politics. Permission for the investigation to continue is currently pending at the Ministry of Justice.

[END CASE]

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Caption: Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement (MST) protest in a rural São Paulo State, August 2003.

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Caption: Demonstrators from India’s Indigenous communities protest in New Delhi, against World Bank support for 30 dams on the Narmada River, March 2001.

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Violence against indigenous and peasant farmer population in Bolivia

Eye-witness accounts link regional officials to the death of 18 people in Bolivia on 11 September 2008. The victims, mainly Indigenous and peasant farmers, were ambushed in the northern department of Pando. Attackers reportedly arrived in official vehicles belonging to opposition authorities who are resisting constitutional reforms that include strengthening the rights of the country’s Indigenous majority. The Ombudsman’s Office, which carried out an initial investigation into the incident, stated that the deaths were the result of a planned massacre. According to reports, many witnesses have been too scared to come forward to give their testimony.

The escalation of violence in Bolivia is the most recent phase in ongoing political tensions and racially motivated attacks against Bolivia’s Indigenous population since President Evo Morales, of

Indigenous descent himself, came to power in 2006. Civilians linked to some regional authorities opposed to President Morales have blocked roads, forcibly seized airports and local branches of state offices, and attacked media outlets and offices of several NGOs.

In the eastern city of Santa Cruz, on 9 September 2008, university students and members of the oppositionist Union of Santa Cruz Youth seized and looted local branches of government offices including the local land reform office as well as two media outlets. Three NGOs promoting the rights of Indigenous and peasant communities were also attacked: their offices were broken into, equipment and furniture destroyed and documentation burned.

One of the NGOs, the Centre of Legal Studies and Social Investigation (CEJIS) works to secure the land rights of Indigenous and peasant farmers. CEJIS director, Leonardo Tamburini, said of the attack: "Thirty years of CEJIS history was all looted and burnt... This type of intimidation takes place because of the work that CEJIS does. CEJIS is a human rights organization devoted to protecting and defending human rights of Indigenous peoples, peasant farmers and those without land. We also support the process of incorporating Indigenous rights into national legislation." On 21 October, after more than a month of dialogue between the Bolivian government and the pro-autonomy opposition, Congress reached an agreement which paves the way for a referendum on the new Constitution. The new Constitution will go to referendum on 25 January 2009.

ACT NOW

Sign up to our petition - calling for investigations into the attacks and demanding concrete steps to ensure that human rights defenders can carry out legitimate work effectively and safely - and read more news on what is happening in Bolivia at www.amnesty.org

Photo caption and copyright: A youth loots a public office during a protest against the government of Bolivia in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, September 2008. © The Associated Press

[WWA]

Russian Federation

Anti-racism campaigner at risk

In the early hours of 1 August 2008, the home of human rights defender Dmitrii Kraiukhin was set on fire and the door barricaded to prevent those inside escaping. Dmitrii Kraiukhin's mother, daughter and granddaughter were inside, but managed to call the fire brigade and escaped unharmed. Dmitrii Kraiukhin is the chief editor of information agency CentrRus. He is also well known for his work opposing the racist activities of extreme nationalist organizations in Russia.

On the night of the arson attack, he was taking part in a youth camp on human rights education. The attack follows a series of intimidating acts against Dmitrii Kraiukhin, including threats written on the walls of his apartment building. On 3 August he received an anonymous letter alleging that the attack was directly connected with his role as a key trial witness against the extreme nationalist organization Russian National Unity.

Police refused to initiate a criminal investigation into the arson attack, classifying it as a petty offence. They then issued an order to dismiss the criminal complaint on 13 August on grounds of "absence of a crime in the acts of unidentified people". Amnesty International believes the harassment is intended to stop Dmitrii Kraiukhin working to combat racism in Russia.

Please write to the Prosecutor General, calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Dmitrii Kraiukhin and the arson attack on his home. Ask that Dmitrii Kraiukhin is kept informed of the investigation's progress and that those responsible for the arson attack and threats are brought to justice according to international standards of fair trial.

Send appeals to:

Yuriiu Yakovlevichu Chaike
Generalnomu prokuroru

Rossiiskoi Federatsii
Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d.15a
125993 g. Moskva GSP- 3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 692 17 25

[inside back cover]

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?

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The Code is available in Arabic, English and Spanish at:

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[back cover]

'Begin in very simple ways' – Sister Helen Prejean