

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

INDIVISIBILITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The object of Amnesty International is to contribute to the observance throughout the world of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In pursuance of this objective, Amnesty International promotes awareness of and adherence to the UDHR and other internationally recognized human rights instruments, the values enshrined in them, and the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and freedoms. Amnesty International believes therefore that awareness of all the principles enshrined in the UDHR, both of economic, social and cultural rights and of civil and political rights, should be promoted concurrently, and seeks to do so in its own work for human rights education and promotion.

Amnesty International's work for individual victims of human rights violations consists in opposing grave violations of the rights of every person freely to hold and express his or her convictions and to be free from discrimination by reason of ethnic origin, sex, colour or language, and of the right of every person to physical and mental integrity. In particular, Amnesty International opposes the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, the detention of any political prisoner without fair trial within a reasonable time, the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances". These are violations of fundamental human rights guaranteed to all people by the UDHR, and elaborated in particular in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In accordance with the recognition in international human rights fora that all human rights and freedoms are indivisible and interdependent, Amnesty International calls on all governments to ratify both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Each of the Covenants recognizes in its Preamble, in accordance with the UDHR, "the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want" and Amnesty International recognizes that the full enjoyment of human rights is essential to the realization of economic, social, cultural and political development. Violations of the human rights of individuals which Amnesty International opposes through its work can never be justified in the name of development. This view is fully supported in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, the preamble of which states that:

"... in order to promote development, equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and ..., accordingly, the promotion of, respect for and enjoyment of certain human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot justify the denial of other human rights and fundamental freedoms..."

The Declaration also explicitly provides in Article 6(3) that all states "should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights".

The protection of civil and political rights is essential to the freedom to pursue economic, social and cultural rights. Many of the victims of human rights violations for whom Amnesty International has worked throughout more than three decades are people whose civil and political rights were violated - who were imprisoned, tortured, "disappeared" or killed - because they worked to promote the economic, social and cultural rights of their fellow people.

By working against such violations, Amnesty International believes it is working not only to protect and promote civil and political rights, but also to promote the conditions for the achievement of economic, social and cultural rights.

The international community has a responsibility to ensure the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. In particular, further measures are needed by intergovernmental organizations to develop appropriate international human rights mechanisms and procedures to monitor and secure the full implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, while continuing to strengthen those existing ones relating to civil and political rights. International public information and human rights education programs should also give due attention to both sets of rights concurrently.

Recognizing that the promotion and protection of all human rights is an international responsibility, Amnesty International urges all governments to make human rights an integral part of their domestic as well as their foreign policies, and an important aspect of the dialogue and relations between governments. Article 3(3) of the Declaration on the Right to Development provides that "states have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development and in eliminating obstacles to development". At the same time and in order to eliminate such obstacles, it is essential that the integral role of human rights in the development process is fully recognized and further developed by governments and by intergovernmental organizations. All governments should consistently at all times seek to ensure that their national and international development policies promote all aspects of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Amnesty International believes that human rights observance should be a matter of mutual discussion between governments, which should express concern regarding human rights violations wherever they occur. This should include concern about those violations which Amnesty International specifically works against, but should be in the context of a common commitment to the full range of internationally recognized civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, expressed in universal standards drawn up and adopted at the international level with the participation of countries in all regions. When discussions take place between governments, it is particularly important that the concern about human rights violations should be objective and consistent and should not be tailored to selective political objectives. There should be an opportunity for all the governments involved in such a dialogue to raise any human rights concerns with each other and all these governments should hold themselves and each other to the same universal standards. Regional, cultural, social, religious or other particularities should never be invoked to justify violations of international human rights norms and standards.

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