

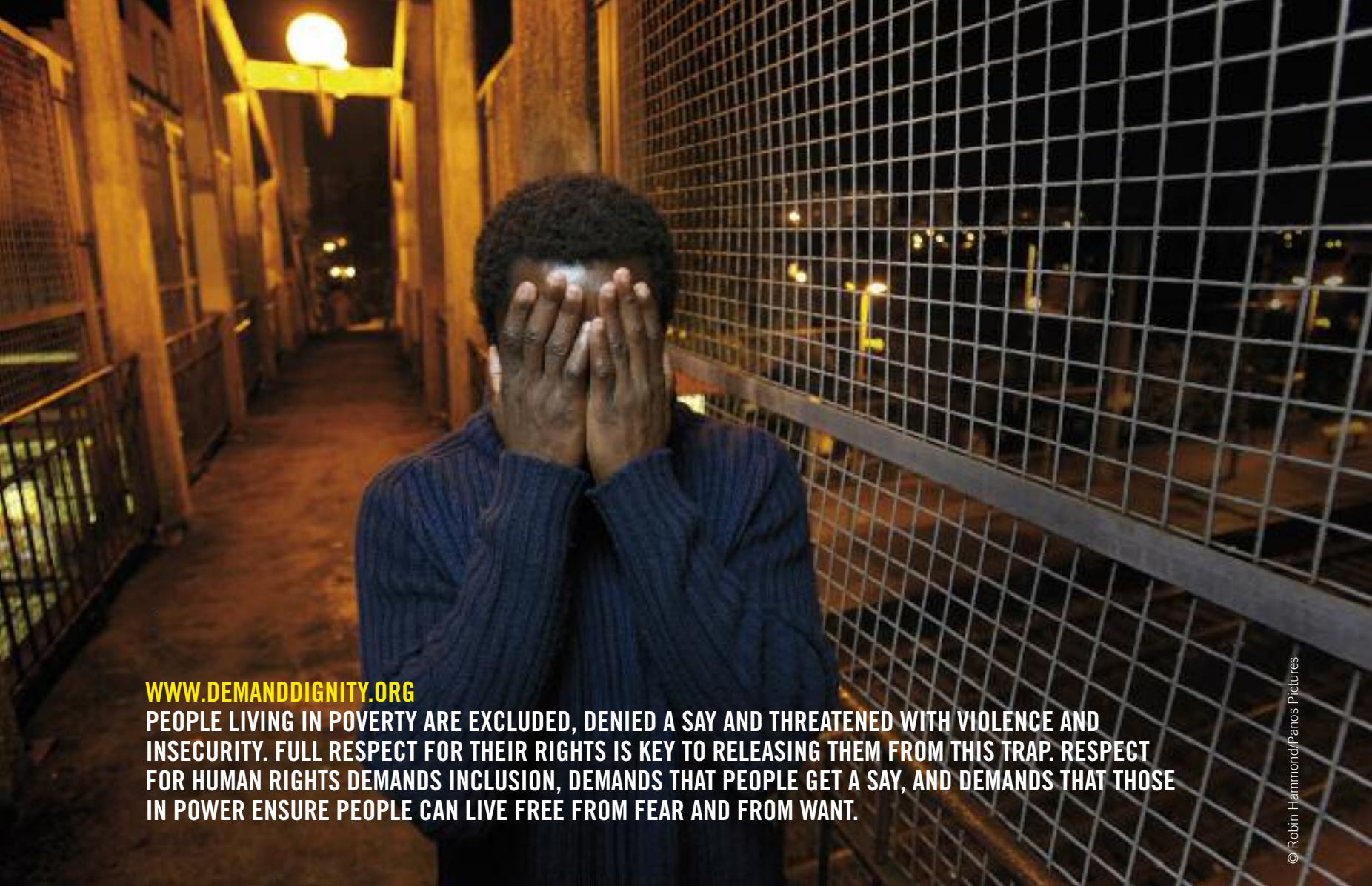
# WIRE

FOR ACTIVISTS AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS  
JUNE/JULY 2009 VOLUME 39 ISSUE 003

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



DEMAND DIGNITY



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**WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG**

**PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY ARE EXCLUDED, DENIED A SAY AND THREATENED WITH VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY. FULL RESPECT FOR THEIR RIGHTS IS KEY TO RELEASING THEM FROM THIS TRAP. RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEMANDS INCLUSION, DEMANDS THAT PEOPLE GET A SAY, AND DEMANDS THAT THOSE IN POWER ENSURE PEOPLE CAN LIVE FREE FROM FEAR AND FROM WANT.**

# THIS IS 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?
- » 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](http://www.amnesty.org/livewire)?

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*Cover photo:* Schoolchildren shout slogans during a rally to solicit responsible participation from citizens in the ongoing elections in New Delhi, India, April 2009.  
© AP Photo/Manish Swarup

*This page:* Simon, aged 18, migrated from Cameroon to France to pursue his dream of becoming a professional footballer. He did not want his face to be shown. Many African teenagers are trafficked or sent to Europe for football trials, only to be abandoned if they do not make the grade.

## GETTING WIRE

Would you like to know more about Amnesty International's campaigns or use the WIRE actionzine for your own activism?

WIRE is available to download online at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org). To receive your free print copy, all you need to do is join our international membership – go to the final page of this issue for more details.

Institutions are welcome to purchase copies. The price for six copies a year for institutions is **£35/US\$54/€41**. Amnesty International sections can purchase copies for their own members. Email us on [wire.subscribe@amnesty.org](mailto:wire.subscribe@amnesty.org) or call **+44 207 413 5814/5507**.

# INSIDE THIS WIRE

## DEMAND DIGNITY

Read about the effects of human rights abuses on people living in poverty and find out about Amnesty International's new global campaign on **PAGE 2**.

Want to know more? Read about the leading issues of the campaign – maternal mortality, corporate accountability, slums and making rights law – on **PAGES 7, 8, 14 AND 15**.



## ADD YOUR VOICE

Our activism pull-out in the centre pages has tips and advice on how to take part in the Demand Dignity campaign, a poster, postcards and a lot more.

**WORLDWIDE APPEALS  
READ, DISTRIBUTE, ACT NOW  
SEE OUR INSERT**

## Q&A

Lawyer and human rights defender Radhia Nasraoui talks to **WIRE** about her struggle to abolish torture in Tunisia. **PAGE 13**.



## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN PARAGUAY

The Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaya Indigenous communities are demanding that the Paraguayan government return their traditional lands. Add your voice and support them. **PAGE 16**.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In the Middle East and North Africa, governments silence and intimidate human rights defenders. Read their stories and show your solidarity. **PAGE 19**.



## WHAT ELSE?

Send a postcard to the South African government and demand that rape victims who arrive from Zimbabwe receive urgent medical treatment (**PAGE 17**); call for the death penalty to be abolished in Japan (**PAGE 17**); and write to the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and urge them to support and compensate the thousands of women who were raped or otherwise sexually abused during the war. (**PAGE 18**).

# FOR A PATH OUT OF POVERTY,

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## TAKE THE HU

**ALL OVER THE WORLD, PEOPLE IN POVERTY ARE DEMANDING DIGNITY. THEY WANT AN END TO THE INJUSTICE AND EXCLUSION THAT KEEP THEM TRAPPED IN DEPRIVATION. THEY WANT TO HAVE CONTROL OVER THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES. THEY WANT THEIR RIGHTS TO BE RESPECTED AND THEIR VOICES TO COUNT. JOIN THEM NOW. ADD YOUR VOICE TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S NEW CAMPAIGN.**

**W**hen people in poverty talk of their experiences, they do not just talk of deprivation – although of course that is key. They also talk about whether they can send their children to school, and whether that school, along with their home, will be bulldozed in the morning. They talk about living in fear of violence, of being treated like criminals, of being excluded not just from what is perceived as “mainstream” society but also from decisions taken on their own behalf and of never being listened to. They talk of losing their scant livelihoods on the whim of an international corporation’s determination to extract resources from under their feet. They talk of arbitrary arrests, of being marginalized, of having no access to justice, and about the experiences that shape their lives: experiences of deprivation, insecurity, exclusion and a sense of voicelessness.

In the next few years, Amnesty International will be working with



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# MAN RIGHTS ROUTE

individuals and communities who are living in poverty to ensure that when they talk about their experiences, governments listen. But in order to do this, we need your support, your opinion and your voice.

## LIFE IN POVERTY

If you live in poverty, you face daily threats to your own personal safety and that of your family. Your home, possessions and livelihoods are likely to be insecure and unprotected by law. You probably have no access to social security, no secure and permanent employment, or any power within the employment relationship. You have no recourse when those with power over you abuse it. You are also more likely to be affected by conflict, exposed to criminal violence and denied the protection of the law and the police that is granted to the better off and those with influence.

If you are poor, your human rights are abused on a regular basis. And without rights, you remain trapped in poverty.

## HUMAN RIGHTS MEAN LESS POVERTY

Full respect for human rights requires the recognition that everyone has the right to live in dignity, and the right to food, water, basic health care, education and shelter. These demands give those living in poverty a tool to change the balance of power that keeps them poor.

People living in poverty are excluded, denied a say and threatened with violence and insecurity. Rights are key to releasing this trap. Respect for human rights demands inclusion, that people have a say, and that those in power ensure people can live free from fear and from want.

## VOICES IGNORED

People living in poverty talk of being ignored by those in power. They feel that their views are not taken into account. Their efforts to organize are met with repression, information relevant to their communities is withheld, and processes for consultation are rigged or ineffective.

Whether through deliberate silencing or being rendered mute by indifference, the effect is the same – an overwhelming sense of voicelessness. It is no mere coincidence that the poorest countries are also among the world's most repressive. Yet even in countries formally committed to democratic principles those living in poverty face difficulties in getting their voices heard.

People living in poverty say they feel shut out by the very institutions set up to deliver the public services they so desperately need. Courts, the police, welfare bodies, municipal councils, utility services, boards of education – ostensibly meant to treat all citizens equally – too often treat poor people with contempt or indifference. And if you are a woman in poverty you suffer the double bind of both family and society excluding you from decision-making processes and power.

In June 2008, the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor revealed that four billion people – the majority of the world's population – are excluded from the rule of law. Up to 71 per cent of children in the least developed countries are not registered by their fifth birthday, leaving them with no documented proof that they were ever born, let alone continue to exist. This impedes their access to health care and education and prevents them from fully participating as political, economic and social actors in society.

## DEMAND DIGNITY

Over at least the next six years, Amnesty International will work to shift the balance of power, together with those who are denied a say as they tell

their own stories and strive to engage in the processes that determine their own future.

Amnesty International's Demand Dignity campaign will initially focus on a few key areas and patterns of human rights abuse which show particularly sharply the interplay of deprivation, insecurity, exclusion and voices ignored. Its overall goal is to end the human rights violations that keep people poor.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY

Half a million women die each year of pregnancy-related complications.

Almost every one of them could have been saved by proper medical care at the right time. Women and girls in poverty have no access to information about the risks when complications occur, particularly if they have had no schooling or are illiterate.

Health costs often keep them from obtaining the care they need. For those living in remote areas, it is hard to reach health facilities – transport costs may be prohibitive or routes impassable.

Read more about how women die during childbirth because of poverty and injustice on page 7.

## CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

The actions of corporations and other businesses affect the lives of people all over the world. Sometimes, the impact on individuals and communities can be disastrous.

People living in poverty in developing countries often bear the brunt of corporate bad practice and abuses. Weak domestic regulation, ineffective enforcement and corporate double standards mean that they have no control over what happens to their land and their communities. They have little access to information and are denied their part in any decision making or future plans for the local areas.

Read how corporations can abuse human rights and keep people in poverty on page 8.



© Kadir van Lohuizen

## OIL, POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE NIGER DELTA

The Niger Delta in Nigeria has massive oil deposits, which have generated billions of dollars in revenue. Yet, the majority of the Niger Delta's 30 million people live in extreme poverty.

People living in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta have been systematically denied access to information about how oil exploration and production will affect them. They have seen their human rights undermined by oil companies and been repeatedly denied access to justice as the government fails to hold companies to account.

In February 2005, soldiers from the Joint Task Force fired on protesters at the Escravos oil terminal on the coast of the western Niger Delta. Bawo Ajeboghuku, a fisherman in his early thirties, was shot and later died from his injuries. At least 30 other demonstrators were injured, some of them seriously, by blows from rifle butts and other weapons.



© Gemma Naccache

## CHANGING A DEADLY SCENARIO IN BRAZIL'S FAVELAS

In thousands of favelas throughout Brazil, many communities are living trapped in poverty and excluded from a range of essential services. Years of state neglect have created a vacuum which has been filled by criminal gangs. These gangs now control everyday life in many communities.

Housing conditions in the favelas are perhaps the most obvious indictment of the extent to which the state has neglected its responsibilities towards these communities. Housing is poor, inadequate and insecure. Even where new housing has been built, the failure to ensure adequate standards of housing and services shows how little consideration was given to the lives of those who would live there. Health workers are often reluctant to enter these communities because of

fear or prejudice, restricting residents' access to essential services.

In some cases, the federal and state governments are beginning to realize that policing based on discrimination and human rights violations will not resolve the problems of these communities. Yet the authorities fail to include residents in the decision-making process. In the face of gross neglect and pervasive violence, these communities are demanding adequate water, sanitation, health care, childcare and education services, appropriate and secure housing, and policing that helps to eradicate violence and crime rather than entrenching it further.

**Page 3:** A refugee family in Goz Amer camp, eastern Chad, May 2004.

**Left:** Women stand next to an oil wellhead that has been regularly spilling crude oil near the community of Ikot Ada Udo, since 2004, in the Niger Delta, Nigeria January 2008. The oil industry in the Niger Delta has pushed many deeper into poverty.

**Above:** A couple with a young baby flee their house, while a military police officer picks his way down an alley. Some 1200 police officers took up strategic points inside Rocinha during the operation, Brazil.

## SLUMS

More than 200,000 communities in the world can be defined as slums. The residents of these neighbourhoods are often excluded from basic services such as safe water, sanitation, health and education.

They are also at constant risk of being forcibly evicted from their homes with little or no warning and they rarely have the power to fight for redress – in the processes and decisions that impact their lives, their voices are routinely ignored.

Read how deprivation and exclusion affect the lives of slum residents on page 14.

## MAKING RIGHTS LAW

Many governments ignore the economic, social and cultural rights of people who live in poverty, or who are otherwise marginalized. Such rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled by regional and national authorities, as well as internationally.

Read about the ways we can protect economic, social and cultural rights on page 15.

## ACT NOW

The Demand Dignity campaign is underway and it needs your support. Help us spread the word: human rights abuses cause and perpetuate poverty. Add your voice to the campaign, and join Amnesty International in ensuring that governments listen to those living in poverty as they demand their rights.

**Go to [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) to find out more about the issues. It is your platform: express your opinions, listen to others' and influence decision makers.**

**Let us know what Dignity means to you. Write a message or upload a video or audio recording of yourself, your family, and your friends. Our collective demand for dignity will be heard louder and clearer with every new voice. You can also let us know what dignity means to you by sending us the postcard in the centrefold.**

**Follow our activism tips on page 9. Share our activism pull-out with others and find even more activism ideas and tools at [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org)**



Go to live wire [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) to 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.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES EXCLUDED FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada, reports from Port of Spain, Trinidad.

“By any measure, one of the most pressing human rights concerns throughout the Americas – in every corner of the hemisphere – is the widespread violation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous communities and leaders in the Americas are themselves well organized and connected with each other; and have been very clear over the years in setting out their vision for strengthened protection of Indigenous rights in the Americas. But the injustice and inaction has continued.

© Amnesty International



Protesters and attendees at the IV People's Summit in Port of Spain highlight their concerns about rights denied and the lack of voice given to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, during the Summit of the Americas, April 2009.

“One would expect therefore that the situation of Indigenous Peoples would have prominence at a gathering such as the Summit of the Americas and that presidents and prime ministers would make a special effort to [have a] dialogue with and show their respect to Indigenous leaders who attend. Far from it!

“I met with a group of Indigenous leaders from Canada, Brazil and Panama who were able to travel to Trinidad. They described feeling utterly excluded from the Summit process here in Port of Spain; excluded to a greater degree than the 2001 and 2005 Summits in Canada and Argentina. Perhaps that is the most distressing point of all – the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from decision-making in the Americas is deepening, not lessening.”

### QUESTIONS FOR THE POLISH PRIME MINISTER

Aleksandra Minkiewicz, Amnesty International Poland, reports from Warsaw, Poland.

“Several dozen activists from Amnesty International demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's office in Warsaw on 4 April. They urged Polish authorities to conduct a transparent investigation of the secret CIA detention centres in Poland.

“Participants at Saturday's event wore white masks and presented short statements on behalf of individuals that had been arrested and tortured during the 'war on terror'.”



Amnesty International activists in the front of the Prime Minister's office in Warsaw, Poland, April 2009.

### CARIBBEAN WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS BUILD LINKS

Ana Hurt and James Burke report from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, where they held a seminar for women human rights defenders from the Caribbean.

“Sirana Dolis, from the Movimiento de Mujeres Dominico-Haitianas (Movement of Dominico-Haitian Women) is called a 'traitor' for her advocacy work on behalf of Dominico-Haitians and she herself runs the risk of expulsion from the country as the authorities refuse to recognize her Dominican nationality: 'I was born here; I won't stop struggling to defend the rights of other like me'.

“All present felt that women human rights defenders in the Caribbean experience a lack of visibility and legitimacy and recounted the different challenges and obstacles they face in their work. Those working to further women's rights are often attacked and stigmatized: 'we are called "men haters" and "male bashers",’ said Dr Sandra Dean-Patterson of the Bahamas Crisis Centre.”



A pregnant Peruvian woman in a maternal waiting house where she can rest until it is time to go to the nearby health facility to give birth. Peru remains one of the countries with the highest maternal mortality ratios in Latin America. The deep inequalities in Peruvian society are reflected in widely different maternal mortality ratios between women in rich and poor areas.

© Enrique Castro-Mendivil



DEMAND DIGNITY

# MATERNAL MORTALITY: A WOMAN A MINUTE

**MORE THAN HALF A MILLION WOMEN DIE EACH YEAR FROM COMPLICATIONS RELATED TO PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH – ONE EVERY MINUTE. MOST OF THESE DEATHS COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED. THE COMPLICATIONS ARE LARGELY UNPREDICTABLE, BUT THEY CAN BE TREATED.**

The vast majority of women who die are poor and come from developing countries. In some western European countries, one woman in 25,000 dies during pregnancy or childbirth. But in sub-Saharan Africa, the lifetime risk of maternal mortality is 1 in 26, and as high as 1 in 7 in some countries. In rich countries, a disproportionate number of the women who die come from marginalized and poor communities.

This is not only a global health emergency; it is a human rights scandal.

Women have the right to life, but they are dying needlessly because of poverty, injustice and gender discrimination. Women have the right to the highest attainable standard of health, but they face financial and social barriers in access to health care. Women have the right to determine when they become pregnant, but many are denied contraception and control over their bodies.

Skilled attendance at birth and emergency obstetric care are key to reducing maternal mortality. But in too many places health care services are of poor quality or are simply inaccessible, especially for women living in poverty and women living in remote areas.

When women living in poverty have to pay for health care, there are delays in the decision to go to a clinic or hospital, delays in reaching the facility because of time spent raising money and delays in receiving treatment once they arrive. These delays can prove deadly.

Poverty drives maternal mortality, and maternal death and injury drive families further into poverty. The women who die leave behind families struggling to survive. More than one million children are left motherless each year.

Maternal mortality reflects the cycle of human rights abuse – deprivation, exclusion, insecurity and voicelessness – that defines and perpetuates poverty.

The UN Millennium Development Goals are internationally agreed targets to reduce poverty. Millennium Development Goal 5 seeks to cut maternal mortality by 75 per cent from 1990 levels by 2015. However, very few countries are on track to reach this target. In sub-Saharan Africa, where the problem is most acute, progress has been negligible.

Maternal mortality is not only a question of public health – it is a critical human rights issue. Women have the right to have access to services that could save their lives or prevent disabling injury in childbirth. Governments are responsible for providing those services. And governments should be held answerable if they fail to do so.

When Fatou died 13 days after delivering twins, her family was devastated. Her grief-stricken husband Ali describes her final days in hospital: “At the hospital, I kept waiting and then I asked why they were not taking care of her. I was told: ‘You must first take care of your wife’. Then I realized that I had to pay.”

Ali was asked to pay for blood tests, syringes, gloves, bleach, alcohol and medicines, although according to government policy, most of these items should be provided free of charge for pregnant women. The time needed to obtain all of these products delayed Fatou’s treatment, and she was getting worse and worse. “I was asked to pay for another prescription which I bought but it was too late.” Fatou died in hospital in Burkina Faso, West Africa, in 2008.

**ACT NOW**

**ADD YOUR VOICE TO [WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG](http://WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG)**

Women and children drinking water from a government truck supplying safe water for the demonstrators protesting the lack of a clean water supply, July 2004. More than 1,000 people took part in the protest.



Just before midnight on 2 December 1984, around half a million people were exposed to poisonous gas when thousands of tons of toxic chemicals leaked into the air from Union Carbide's pesticide plant in Bhopal, India.

Between 7,000 and 10,000 people died within days. At least a further 15,000 died over the following 20 years of related causes. More than 100,000 people suffered chronic, debilitating illnesses for which treatment is largely ineffective.

The Bhopal disaster shocked the world and raised fundamental questions about corporate accountability. Nevertheless, a quarter of a century later, many survivors are still waiting for adequate compensation. US and Indian courts have failed to deliver justice and a full, independent investigation has never been held.

# CORPORATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND POVERTY

**GLOBALIZATION HAS BROUGHT UNPRECEDENTED POWER AND INFLUENCE FOR CORPORATIONS. BUT WHEN CORPORATIONS' ACTIVITIES ABUSE HUMAN RIGHTS AND DRIVE PEOPLE DEEPER INTO POVERTY THERE IS OFTEN NO EFFECTIVE MEANS TO HOLD COMPANIES TO ACCOUNT OR TO ENSURE REDRESS FOR THOSE AFFECTED.**

Companies have an enormous impact on the rights of individuals and communities. This impact can be positive, for example the creation of new jobs and an increase in state revenue that can be used to fund basic services. Yet all too often, human rights are abused as corporations exploit weak and poorly enforced domestic regulation and the lack of international accountability mechanisms to devastating effect in developing countries.

Allegations of human rights abuse are particularly high in the extractive industry. This is not surprising, given the impact that such operations have on land and water resources. Communities may be forcibly relocated to make way for extractive activities. Traditional livelihoods – and lives – can be destroyed or threatened as land is contaminated and water supplies are polluted or overused.

The arrival of well-resourced companies seeking to win over local communities can also lead to increased violence and social conflict, as some people are excluded from the benefits of economic development. This can be exacerbated by the lack of transparency in the way companies award community contracts and payments.

Affected communities are frequently denied access to information about the impact of company operations and excluded from participating in decisions

that affect their lives, increasing insecurity and deprivation.

When abuses do occur, the situation is further compounded when communities are denied access to justice, and governments cannot or will not hold companies to account. The consequence is continued abuse, further entrenching the cycle of poverty.

In the name of economic efficiency, states have privatized many state services including those critical for the realization of human rights, such as the right to education, health, and water. However, states often fail to ensure that companies deliver these services without discrimination.

Public service contracts cannot be a way for states to contract out of their human rights obligations. They must ensure that all companies operate within the bounds of human rights law.

Economic globalization has expanded the reach of companies across national borders. However, regulation of companies has failed to keep pace. A system of regulation must urgently be put in place that ensures redress for those affected and prevents the pursuit of profit at the expense of human rights.

**ACT NOW**

**ADD YOUR VOICE TO [WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG](http://WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG)**

# TOP TIPS:

## HOW TO ADD YOUR VOICE AND JOIN THE DEMAND DIGNITY CAMPAIGN

DEMAND DIGNITY IS AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES THAT KEEP PEOPLE POOR. JOIN US IN GETTING PEOPLE INTERESTED AND ACTIVE ABOUT THE ISSUES OF THE CAMPAIGN. HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS ON HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION AND DEMAND DIGNITY FOR ALL.

### ACT NOW

Your activism pull-out: see inside for World Wide Appeals, postcards and other activism tools.

### DON'T FORGET

Tell friends, human rights defenders and activists to add their voice to [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org)



### ADD YOUR VOICE TO WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG

#### WHAT IS DIGNITY? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU? WHAT IS IT WORTH?

Go to [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org), an online community for people who want justice and equality. You can use the website to speak out about human rights and hear what others have to say. You can also respond to other people's voices and have 'real time' conversations.

The site can help you to get in touch with people that you might want to campaign, volunteer, work or collaborate with. You can use it to connect with people in your own community or on the other side of the world. You can find people who want to campaign on the same issues as you, or find out about what other people think is important.

[www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) lets you add your voice: to demand human rights and to break the cycle of poverty and abuse. You can also share your voice through independent blogs and connect to bookmarking sites such as StumbleUpon and Delicious.

### WHY NOT...

download 'widgets', banners' and 'badges' that will allow you to either publish information from [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) or let visitors to your own blog and website share their thoughts. Using the widget, you can create your own website about your campaign action.

Prefer your mobile phone? Send an SMS text message to +447786 200220 and your message will be automatically uploaded to [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org). You can also access [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) via your mobile broadband – standard international rates apply.

### WHY NOT...

invite guest speakers? Can you get people who are directly affected by the issues to speak about them? Try to invite key decision-makers and policy-makers and ask them to respond to the issues being discussed.

### SPEAK OUT FOR DIGNITY

Organize an event for people in your local community to come together and talk about why improving human rights is essential to defeating poverty. The discussion can focus on the connection between dignity, human rights and poverty. You could also pick some of the key Demand Dignity issues and themes – such as the right to maternal health (see page 7), and the right to housing (see page 14).

Your event could be a day, a half day or an evening. You could hold a series of events – over a few weeks or in different villages, towns and cities. If you do this, you could promote the events together as a wider initiative. You could involve musicians from local communities who are affected by the issues raised by the campaign – for example, Indigenous Peoples or communities living in disadvantaged areas.

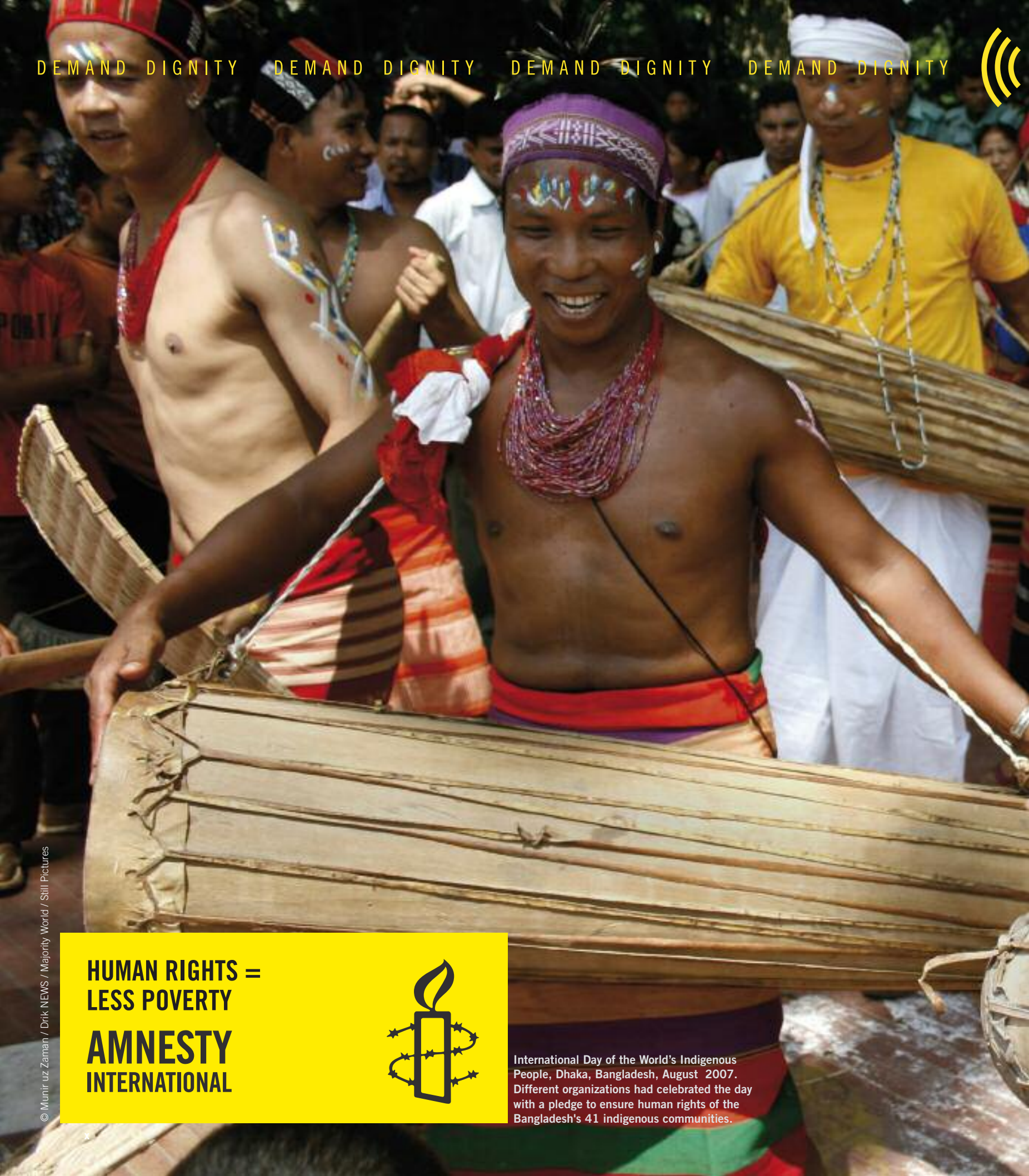


### DON'T FORGET

Get people to talk about what dignity means to them. Write down, record and film your debate, individual speeches and testimonies.

Please email the Amnesty International Online Communities Team at [online.communities@amnesty.org](mailto:online.communities@amnesty.org) for more information about becoming an Event Organizer. We can also help you publicize your event.

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© Munir uz Zaman / Drik NEWS / Majority World / Still Pictures

**HUMAN RIGHTS =  
LESS POVERTY**

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International Day of the World's Indigenous People, Dhaka, Bangladesh, August 2007. Different organizations had celebrated the day with a pledge to ensure human rights of the Bangladesh's 41 indigenous communities.

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DEMAND DIGNITY

DEMAND DIGNITY

DEMAND DIGNITY





Whatever your campaign action, try and take photos, record voices or video events.

You can share these with other campaign activists and Amnesty International members on [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) or you can send them to:

Amnesty International  
Online Communities Team  
International Secretariat  
Peter Benenson House  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1 ODW  
United Kingdom

### WHY NOT...

take a picture and upload it to the Online Communities spaces? For help and information, email [Online.Communities@amnesty.org](mailto:Online.Communities@amnesty.org)

## MAKE A MARK

Demand Dignity uses an amplification sign as its symbol because we want the world to hear the voices that are silenced by poverty itself, and by the abuses that drive poverty. This is not about speaking on behalf of people who live in poverty but about amplifying their voices so others can hear and understand their reality.

Use the stencil inside this pull-out to create a visual statement about Demand Dignity. It is a good way of showing people what Demand Dignity is about and why they should support the campaign.

Be symbolic – display the Demand Dignity symbol in significant locations in your local area. Stencil the symbol onto walls, public spaces, galleries, bridges, roads or paths, but remember to get permission first.

The sign is so simple, you can draw it yourself. Draw the symbol in sand or snow, or cut it into grass, vegetation or hedges. Embroider or paint the symbol using a local traditional technique. You could involve community or local groups to help you. They could create squares or sections of the symbol that you can put together into one large display.



## DON'T FORGET

If you are going to do something visual in a public place, you might need to get permission.

### WHY NOT...

involve young people or schools? You could ask them to write songs or poems about some of the campaign issues.

## DON'T FORGET

You might need to get permission to hold your event in a public place. In some countries or areas, you might need an additional licence if you are staging live music.

## MAKE A NOISE

Organize a demonstration or event that uses sound to get people's attention and amplifies the call for change. You can make any kind of noise – for example, chanting, live music, story telling or speeches, or reading out statistics about the campaign issues. You can find more information on [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org)

Think about the most effective place to make a noise in your community. It could be outside your national parliament, an appropriate government ministry, a local council building or in a public space such as a town square, marketplace or park.

You could involve musicians from local communities who are affected by the issues raised by the campaign – for example, Indigenous Peoples or communities living in disadvantaged areas.



# RADHIA NASRAOUI

**Q** WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS?

**A** At home, my parents taught me the value of standing up against injustice and that was a lesson that followed throughout my childhood and my years in school. At university, I learned to fight for freedoms and democracy within the student movement in the 1970s under Bourguiba [former President Habib Bourguiba]. When I became a lawyer, the first case I ever worked on as a young lawyer in 1976 was defending a group of students who were arrested during a demonstration.

**Q** WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN TUNISIA?

**A** That people fear the authorities. People are scared of being harassed and jailed. The Tunisian authorities show the world an image of Tunisia as a beautiful country, modern and peaceful. Publicly, the authorities say that there are no problems in Tunisia, no terrorism and so on. But at the same time, hundreds of young people in the country are arrested and accused of terrorism. Tunisia can be a dangerous place for anyone who defends human rights: you can lose your job, your passport, all your rights, your house or office can be visited [by the police] when you are away, you can get arrested, beaten, tortured, and your family can be harassed. If you are a lawyer, the authorities can put pressure on your clients to change lawyer, leading to financial pressure.

**Q** IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT THE SITUATION IN TUNISIA, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

**A** I would eliminate torture and impunity, so that people can participate in the struggle for freedoms, human rights and democracy without fearing torture. That is why I co-founded the Association for the Fight against Torture (Association de lutte contre la torture en Tunisie, ALTT) in 2003. It is a small unauthorized organization that tries to tackle the problem. We have approached many people in Tunisia, many human rights defenders, and invited them to join us, but they are worried, because once you become a member you come up against torturers who enjoy total impunity. Once you join, they begin to think of you as a threat. I used to have problems with the police even before we started Association de lutte contre la torture en Tunisie (ALTT); my office was ransacked several times. But they never physically attacked me. The police wouldn't beat anyone in my presence because they knew I was in touch with organizations such as Amnesty International and [...] with journalists. After ALTT was founded, the police became more brutal. I was beaten several times. In 2005, I was on my way to a political demonstration and was followed by a group of plain clothes police. The police attacked me before I even got to the gathering point. They beat me and broke my nose. I never had the right to an investigation over this aggression.

**Q** WHAT IMPACT DOES YOUR WORK HAVE ON YOUR LIFE AND YOUR FAMILY?

**A** My whole family has been punished for my work – my daughters, my brothers. My brothers are not involved in my work at all, but they still cannot find permanent jobs. One of them was refused authorization for commercial activities. The police know everything because they listen to the telephone. There is absolutely no respect for our privacy: they know everything that goes on in the family [...] All the phones are bugged. My mobile was cut off more than two months ago. I was speaking to a fellow human rights defender who was having problems with the police. He called to ask me to help him raise the support of other activists. As soon as we were finished, I started dialling the number of another colleague, but the line was cut off. My family lives in constant uncertainty and insecurity: we always expect to have problems after an interview, after a public speech, after pleadings in court...

**Q** DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR OUR READERS?

**A** It is important to go on. Your letters and petitions help those who are affected by human rights violations. They feel less isolated [and the regime wants] to isolate people. That can be changed. We must use our voices. Not saying anything makes us accomplices. Solidarity is the most important way to help others. It makes people feel they are not alone in their struggle.



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TUNISIA CAN BE A DANGEROUS PLACE FOR ANYONE WHO DEFENDS HUMAN RIGHTS

Radhia Nasraoui is a Tunisian human rights activist and lawyer. She is the co-founder and president of the Association for the Fight against Torture in Tunisia (ALTT) and has endured years of harassment and intimidation because of her human rights activities.

# SLUMS: HUMAN RIGHTS LIVE HERE

**MORE THAN 1 BILLION PEOPLE ACROSS ALL CONTINENTS LIVE IN SLUMS. THESE COMMUNITIES, CHARACTERIZED BY INADEQUATE HOUSING, LACK OF BASIC SERVICES, OVERCROWDING AND HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY ARE ALSO PLACES WHERE RESIDENTS LIVE, WORK, AND RAISE THEIR CHILDREN. YET, MANY GOVERNMENTS ARE FAILING IN THEIR DUTY TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THESE PEOPLE.**

**G**lobal slum populations are growing at alarming rates. Disinvestment in rural areas, conflict, natural disasters, climate change, forced evictions and corporate land grabbing continue to force people to migrate to cities where affordable housing is scarce.

People living in slums experience a staggering number of human rights violations. They are routinely denied their right to adequate housing, safe water, sanitation and drainage, electricity, health and education, and face the constant threat of police and gang violence and forced eviction.

Slum residents pay disproportionately high rents because rent control legislation is rarely imposed in areas considered by the authorities to be “unregularized”. Access to justice is denied because of discrimination and residents have no say in the upgrading of homes or services.

The absence of health facilities and schools within many slums severely restricts access to health care and education. Malnutrition and child mortality rates in slums often match rural areas.

Many urban residents in the developing world lack legal papers guaranteeing security of tenure, increasing their susceptibility to forced evictions and restricting access to services and formal employment. Often, people who live in slums without official documentation are also denied the right to vote.

Forced evictions are a violation of human rights and often result in people losing their possessions, social networks, and access to work and services. Mass forced evictions are increasingly carried out by governments so that slums can be cleared for urban development, city beautification or national projects, such as the Beijing Olympics.

Women are particularly vulnerable in slums, where lack of facilities place them at greater risk of sexual assault and harassment, and where the reporting of domestic violence is often not treated seriously by police. Property law also frequently discriminates against women.

The negative perceptions of people living in slums have contributed directly to a serious deterioration in public security in these communities. In Brazil and Jamaica, this failure by the state has allowed criminal gangs and drug factions to dominate virtually every aspect of life.

Governments have failed to address these issues at both national and international levels. Amnesty International is calling on governments to end forced evictions, ensure equal access to public services for people living in slums, and ensure their active participation in all plans directed at slum upgrading.

**ACT NOW**

**ADD YOUR VOICE TO [WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG](http://WWW.DEMANDDIGNITY.ORG)**



**A child crosses a footbridge above an open sewer while another throws rubbish into it in the Cité Soleil slum, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.**

Maria Sebastião António, a 31-year-old mother of three, lives in Banga Wé, Angola. Several attempts were made to evict her family and more than 500 people from their neighbourhood in order to make room for the Nova Vida (New Life) housing project.

“From 2004 until 2006 there were demolitions here. We were not even warned. We were just taken by surprise. We had to work every day and never knew whether we would find our homes when we returned.

“I used to have a house made of concrete blocks, but it was destroyed in the demolitions [...] they destroyed the house made of blocks but did not touch the zinc sheets used for the roof, so we used them to build a house of zinc [...] they came back six days later to destroy the zinc houses as well.

“We don’t have water. Our children are not allowed to study. The Nova Vida School is not even allowing our children to register. The other schools are too far away. The worst thing is that there is still no solution to this problem.”



# MAKING RIGHTS LAW

HOW CAN WE GUARANTEE THAT ALL GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS? HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT EVERYONE HAS EQUAL AND FULL RECOURSE TO JUSTICE? BY CAMPAIGNING, LOUD AND CLEAR, FOR SUCH RIGHTS TO BE ENFORCED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

Many countries around the world fail to recognize or to enforce economic, social and cultural rights, leaving people with little hope of an effective remedy when their rights are violated. In many cases, the remedies that do exist may be ineffective. This means that when, for example, people are forcibly evicted from their homes, they do not receive adequate reparation, including compensation, rehabilitation and restitution

Human rights are indivisible. All rights should be protected, respected and fulfilled, fully and without exception. National legal systems must be able to guarantee that rights are fully enforced, to hold governments accountable when such rights are violated and to ensure that all people have recourse to justice all of the time. When legal systems fail to do so, those whose rights have been violated should have the opportunity to access effective remedies internationally.

However, unlike some other human rights, there is no international mechanism in place to deal with complaints about violations of economic, social and cultural rights: in such cases, people are unable to seek justice outside their own country.

For the last five years, Amnesty International has been campaigning with other local, national and international organizations to strengthen the enforceability of economic, social and cultural rights. We will be building and expanding on our work in this area under the Demand Dignity Campaign.



At the international level, we will continue to campaign for the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Optional Protocol). The Optional Protocol establishes an international mechanism that provides an avenue of redress for those who are unable to seek justice in their own countries. The decisions made by this new mechanism are likely to influence decisions of national and regional courts around the world.

Amnesty International will also use this campaign for the Optional Protocol as an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with governments on the measures they should be taking nationally to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights are enforceable and that victims have access to effective remedies.

Amnesty International will also publicly campaign for the implementation of key judicial decisions on economic, social and cultural rights.

For example, on page 16 you can join our call to the Paraguayan government to implement the Inter-American Court's decision to return land to two Indigenous communities.

## ACT NOW

On 24 September 2009, at a signing ceremony at the United Nations in New York, states can sign up and become a party to the Optional Protocol. **Please join Amnesty International and many other organizations and activists around the world on our call to bring the Optional Protocol into force: sign the online global petition on [www.demanddignity.org](http://www.demanddignity.org) in August 2009. Please also call on the government in your own country to become a party to this new instrument.**

Stills from Amnesty International's animation film about the Optional Protocol. It is available to watch on [www.amnesty.org/escr](http://www.amnesty.org/escr)



# UNITING OUR VOICES TO CAMPAIGN FOR RIGHTS

## CAMPAIGNING IN PARAGUAY WITH THE YAKYE AXA AND SAWHOYAMAXA

**'FOR 20 YEARS WE HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING TO RECOVER OUR ANCESTRAL LAND. THAT'S WHY WE'RE LIVING ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND OUR LIVING CONDITIONS ARE SO PRECARIOUS. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO SHOW YOUR SOLIDARITY WITH US, TO HELP US INTERNATIONALLY... WE NEED YOU.'**

José González, Sawhoyamaxa, November 2008

The Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa Indigenous communities in Paraguay have led a determined campaign for the return of their traditional lands for many years. Responding to requests from the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa, a team of Amnesty International representatives spent several days with the communities in late 2008. They organized workshops for the communities to voice their key concerns and priorities. These formed the basis of a campaign, launched in March 2009, in which Amnesty International adds its voice to the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa campaign for justice.

The Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa have been living at the side of a highway in the Paraguayan Chaco region for more than 10 years. In the past, community members working on private estates that had taken over their lands suffered widespread exploitation. Today the communities are living in deplorable and degrading conditions with severely limited access to education, health, water, sanitation and other services. Separated from their traditional lands, the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa have seen their unique cultures start to disintegrate. For them, as for other Indigenous Peoples, ancestral land is crucial to their world view, religious beliefs and cultural identity, as well as providing their main means of subsistence.

In 2005 and 2006, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa. It ordered Paraguay to return their traditional land, now in private hands, and take a series of interim measures to ensure the communities are able to maintain themselves until this is achieved. The deadlines for the return of their traditional lands have passed, but the land is still in private hands. The Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa are painfully aware of the consequences of the



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**Members of the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa march to Congress in the capital, Asunción, to deliver signatures of support from around the world, 31 March 2009.**

authorities' continued failure to implement the Court's rulings. Between December 2008 and January 2009 alone, six members of the Sawhoyamaxa died from preventable diseases, among them four children under the age of two.

Since March 2009, a bill to expropriate Yakye Axa lands from the current owner has been before Congress and negotiations between the Sawhoyamaxa and the current landowner have yet to yield any results. Amnesty International is calling on the Paraguayan authorities to show their political commitment by complying with the Inter-American Court rulings. President Fernando Lugo has made a series of promises to address the historical injustices faced by Paraguay's Indigenous Peoples. Although he has taken some

steps, these have been limited. It is time for him and his government to match his rhetoric with concerted action.

### ACT NOW

**Please call on the Paraguayan authorities to comply fully with the two Inter-American Court judgements, in particular by immediately restoring traditional lands to the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa and by setting aside adequate resources to ensure the communities' survival, in particular the regular provision of food, adequate medical care and clean drinking water, and access to education.**

Please write to:

Dr Fernando Armino Lugo Méndez  
Presidente de la República del Paraguay  
Palacio de los López, Asunción, Paraguay  
Fax: +595 (0)21 414 0201

Inter-Institutional Commission for the Compliance with International Judgements  
José Enrique García Ávalos  
Procurador General de la República del Paraguay  
Procuraduría General de la República

José Berges 1007 c/Perú  
Asunción, Paraguay  
Fax: +595 (0)21 212 220

**Please call on the Presidents of the Chambers of Congress to approve without further delay the bill on the expropriation of the traditional lands of the Yakye Axa submitted by President Fernando Lugo in November 2008.**

President of the Honourable Chamber of Senators  
Sen. Enrique González Quintana  
Fax: +595 (0)21 414 5905  
Email: gquintana@senado.gov.py

President of the Honourable Chamber of Deputies  
Dip. Nac. Enrique S. Buzarquis Cáceres  
Fax: +595 (0)21 414 4365  
Email: escbuzarquis@diputados.gov.py  
The address for both is 14 de Mayo y Avda. República, Asunción, Paraguay

To read more, go to our website  
<http://snipr.com/i9h11>

# JAPAN – 41 YEARS IN THE SHADOW OF THE GALLOWS

Amnesty International is calling for a retrial for Hakamada Iwao who has been under sentence of death in Japan since 1968. In March 2009, Alistair Carmichael, a UK Member of Parliament and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, visited Japan to discuss the issue of the death penalty and in particular the case of Hakamada Iwao. As well as meeting Hakamada Iwao's sister and supporters, Alistair Carmichael met Judge Kumamoto Norimichi, one of three judges who ruled on the case in 1968, who has since publicly stated that he believes Hakamada to be innocent.

Executions in Japan are shrouded in secrecy. Prisoners are told only hours before they are put to death, and their families receive no notice of their loved ones' imminent execution. Under the current system, a prisoner is usually notified on the morning of the day of execution, which means

that they live for years or decades with the constant fear that each day may be their last. Since August 2007, Japan has executed 25 people.

Life on death row in Japan is strictly controlled, including how many letters prisoners may write and when they may go to the toilet. Although all aspects of everyday life are regulated, individual prison directors have the power to apply rules arbitrarily, thereby adding to the disorientation suffered by prisoners. Contact with the outside world is limited to infrequent and supervised visits from lawyers and family members. Continuously enduring these conditions has led to depression and other mental illness among death row inmates.

In a new judicial system due to be introduced in May, six members of the public will sit alongside three judges. Together they will decide on serious criminal cases, including murder. Amnesty International hopes that this

## ACT NOW

Call on the Japanese Minister of Justice to grant a retrial for Hakamada Iwao in accordance with international standards and for Japan to establish a moratorium on death sentences and executions as a first step towards full abolition of the death penalty.

Please write to:  
Minister Mori Eisuke  
Ministry of Justice  
1-1-1 Kasumigaseki  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 100-8977  
Japan



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will initiate an informed public debate on the death penalty and raise awareness on this ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

**From left to right: Alistair Carmichael, MP; Hideko Hakamada (Hakamada Iwao's sister); Judge Kumamoto Norimichi.**

# RAPE SURVIVORS DENIED TREATMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Rape survivors are being denied treatment and care at a South African hospital near the Zimbabwean border if they have not first reported their case to the police. This practice breaches South Africa's human rights obligations as well as domestic law. The hospital, which is in the town of Musina in Limpopo province, is the only public hospital in the district.

Many of the women struggling to gain access to emergency services at Musina Hospital are asylum-seekers and irregular migrants who were raped while making the hazardous journey across the border from Zimbabwe. The isolated unofficial routes they took left them vulnerable to violence and robbery by organized

criminal gangs. Some also experienced sexual violence while at temporary shelters or in hiding in the bushes after arriving in Musina.

A 2008 study by the International Organization for Migration in Limpopo found that over one quarter of irregular migrants surveyed had experienced violence while crossing into South Africa. In addition more than two thirds of those who had been raped did not report their cases to the police out of fear of arrest and deportation.

Denying or delaying emergency medical treatment and care for rape survivors can have grave implications for women's health. Rape is associated with increased sexual and reproductive health problems. In southern Africa, it

also puts women at increased risk of HIV infection, because of the prevalence of HIV. Some of the women crossing the border were raped by a number of men in a single attack, a further risk factor for HIV. Treatment to prevent possible HIV infection after rape must be provided within 72 hours.

South Africa has accepted obligations under human rights treaties to ensure that women's right to health is respected, protected and fulfilled. The right to health is also protected under the Constitution. According to South African law, a rape survivor does not have to lay a criminal charge before being given access to HIV prevention treatment at a health facility. National health policy gives priority to meeting the needs of the survivor, whether or

not they report to the police. The practice at Musina Hospital of turning away rape survivors who have not reported to the police is clearly in conflict with these legal and policy requirements.

## ACT NOW

Please sign and send the attached postcard to the South African Minister for Health and Social Development, calling on her to ensure that that women's right to health is respected, protected and fulfilled at Musina Hospital.

To read more on the plight of rape survivors in South Africa go to <http://snipr.com/i9hpf>



## WOMEN STILL SEEK JUSTICE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**THOUSANDS OF WOMEN WERE RAPED OR SEXUALLY ABUSED DURING THE WAR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BUT THEIR SUFFERING IS YET TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED. MANY SURVIVORS ARE NOT GUARANTEED THEIR RIGHTS, INCLUDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE, COMPENSATION AND ADEQUATE FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT. IT IS TIME FOR THE AUTHORITIES TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF THESE WOMEN.**

**M**aja (not her real name) was raped by a Bosnian Serb Army soldier in 1995. Since that date, she has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. The rape damaged some of her internal organs and she is still in pain. “I sometimes feel as if they [the soldiers] were still above me, still controlling my life”, she says. Although Maja filed a complaint, the police have never investigated her case.

Like many other women who were raped or otherwise sexually abused during the war, Maja lives in a remote rural area of what is now Republika Srpska, an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina where the majority of the population is Bosnian Serbs. Maja and her parents are Bosnian Croats. The family’s only source of income is her parents’ small pension of 50 convertible marks (€25) per month.

Maja is unemployed, and although she has health insurance, she cannot afford to travel to the nearest doctor or pay for the medicines she needs. The law in Republika Srpska entitles civilian victims of war, including rape survivors, to a specific social benefit, but Maja, who was unaware of the law, missed the deadline for registration, and cannot receive this benefit.

Thousands of women across Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be affected by the crimes of sexual violence that took place during the 1992-1995 war. This violence, and the inhuman and degrading treatment they suffered has had a long-lasting physical, psychological and social impact on their lives. Fourteen years after the end of war, many of the survivors continue to seek justice. They want their rights to be recognized and want to be able to regain control over their lives.



### SUFFERING IN SILENCE

The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has failed to bring the perpetrators of war crimes of sexual violence to justice. It has also failed to address the impact of these war crimes on the lives of these women. It does not give them the medical and psychological support that they need and is yet to ensure that all survivors receive compensation and access to economic and social rights.

War crimes of sexual violence are still a taboo in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is no public discussion and little understanding of the long-term effects of the crimes, so survivors are unable to speak openly about their experiences. By speaking out, they risk being excluded and stigmatized and many choose to remain silent. Some women find it so hard to cope that they end up taking their own lives.

In a new report published in June 2009, Amnesty International examines the failure of the authorities to

guarantee to survivors access to justice and reparation, including compensation, social benefits and medical and psychological support. The organization is working in co-operation with women’s NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure that the government implements comprehensive measures to support survivors of sexual violence, in line with its obligations under international human rights law.

### ACT NOW

**Please call on the Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure that all cases of rape and other war crimes of sexual violence are promptly investigated and prosecuted in accordance with international fair trial standards.**

**Please also call on the Prime Minister to take immediate action to develop a state strategy on reparations for victims of war crimes of sexual violence. This strategy should include measures of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction**

**Bosnian Muslim women calling for justice outside the offices of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Sarajevo, July 2008.**

**and guarantees of non-repetition. Urge him to devise the strategy in consultation with survivors and relevant NGOs.**

Please write to:  
Prime Minister Nikola Špirić  
(Chairman of the Council of Ministers)  
Trg BiH 1, 71 000 Sarajevo  
Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Please send copy of your letter to the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who represents the international community there:**

Valentin Inzko  
High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Emerika Bluma 1  
71 000 Sarajevo  
Bosnia and Herzegovina

# CHALLENGING REPRESSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

**MOST STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA ARE HOSTILE TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS. THEY TRY TO SILENCE THEIR VOICES, PENALIZE THEIR ACTIVITIES AND INTIMIDATE THEM INTO PASSIVITY. THIS HAS DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DEFENDERS THEMSELVES AND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY ACROSS THE REGION.**

National laws in the Middle East and North Africa region restrict the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly – prerequisites for human rights defenders. Defenders are often charged with offences such as “insult”, “slander”, “dissemination of false information” and “anti-state propaganda”.

In Syria, lawyer Anwar al-Bunni is serving 15 years in prison for raising concerns that a detainee might have died in custody as a result of torture. In Algeria, Louisa Saker was fined for taking part in a march demanding truth and justice for the families of thousands of victims of enforced disappearance in the 1990s. In Iran, Saleh Kamrani, an Azerbaijani minority rights activist, has been abducted from his office, imprisoned, banned from working as a lawyer, and repeatedly arrested.

In several states, such as Libya and Saudi Arabia, the laws and the way



Anwar al-Bunni

they are interpreted effectively prohibit independent human rights NGOs; in others, where such organizations do exist, repressive laws are used to harass and intimidate their members.

In Egypt, the 2002 law on associations grants the Ministry of Social Solidarity the right to disband any NGO deemed to perform “unauthorized” activities, enabling the government to exert unwarranted control over the operations of NGOs. In September 2007 the Association for Human Rights and Legal Aid was dissolved for receiving foreign funds without permission from the Ministry. The Association was apparently targeted for its work with victims of torture. In October 2008, the Administrative Court suspended implementation of the government’s decision after finding it to be legally groundless.

States of emergency in force for decades in Syria and Egypt are invoked to hand down severe punishments.



Louisa Saker



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Meanwhile, anti-terrorism legislation in the region has worsened the environment for human rights defenders. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, the Decree Law on the fight against terrorist crimes penalizes even non-violent attempts to “disrupt public order, undermine security, expose people to danger or wreak destruction of the environment”.



Saleh Kamrani

**A woman signs the petition demanding changes to laws discriminating against women in Iran.**

has, however, become increasingly difficult in recent years as the Israeli authorities have restricted freedom of movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Palestinian human rights defenders, like the rest of the population, are hemmed in by Israeli blockades and checkpoints, some also facing individual bans on travelling abroad, while Israeli defenders are denied access to most areas where their Palestinian counterparts live and work.

In a region where governments persistently fail to respect human rights, the role of human rights defenders is especially crucial. For these courageous women and men to continue their work, they must be able to count on the support of the international community until their campaigns are acknowledged and their aspirations realized.

## ACT NOW

**Please show solidarity with human rights defenders in the region by using our Middle East Human Rights Defenders dedicated Facebook page. This link will keep you up to date on information and actions regarding human rights defenders:**

[www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Amnesty-International-Human-Rights-Defenders-in-MENA/184857650509?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Amnesty-International-Human-Rights-Defenders-in-MENA/184857650509?ref=ts)  
To read more on the situation of human rights defenders in the region, go to our website: <http://snipr.com/i9hok>

## FIGHTING BACK

Despite the many risks, defenders across the region continue to stand up for human rights. Their persistence has brought about changes.

For example, as a result of Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations working together on particular cases, the Israeli Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in 1999 which effectively outlaws the use of torture by Israeli forces. Such joint work

## GAMBIA DAY OF ACTION

Every year, the President of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, celebrates 22 July – a state holiday – as “freedom day”. Amnesty International is holding a day of action to draw attention to the lack of political freedoms in the country and the widespread human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, denial of freedom of expression, and excessive use of force by the security forces. We hope sections will use the opportunity to increase pressure, through other West African governments USA, the UN, and the European Union, to force the Gambian government to improve its human rights record.

Gambia is the destination for thousands of tourists each year, mostly from the Netherlands, Scandinavia and the UK. Information on human rights in the Gambia is scarce - most international NGOs are denied access, and the international community has generally

## DID YOU KNOW?

turned a blind eye to human rights violations in the country.

Demonstrations are planned in Dakar (Senegal), Accra (Ghana), London (UK) and Washington (USA). Press conferences will also take place in several West African countries. If you are interested in taking part – holding a demonstration or organizing a press conference – please contact Ayodele Ameen, campaigner on the Gambia (aameen@amnesty.org).

To read more, go to <http://snipr.com/i9hq>

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## TIANANMEN SQUARE: 20 YEARS WITHOUT JUSTICE

4 June marks the 20th anniversary of the 1989 military crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy protestors in and around Tiananmen Square in Beijing. To this day, the authorities have not only failed to bring those responsible for these serious human rights violations to justice, but have also suppressed any public debate and discussion of the protests. Those seeking justice for the victims continue to be subjected to police harassment, arbitrary detention and sometimes imprisonment.

Amnesty International is urging the National People's Congress to call for

### Peaceful protesters gathered in Tiananmen Square, China, May 1989.

an open and impartial inquiry into the events, bring the perpetrators to justice, release those who remain in prison for peacefully exercising their human rights, and end the persecution of human rights defenders and activists who are seeking accountability.

For more information on commemorative events and campaign actions around 4 June, please go to [www.protectthehuman.com/tiananmen](http://www.protectthehuman.com/tiananmen) or contact your Amnesty International sections or local offices.

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.



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Amnesty International UK flower-laying protest in front of the Iranian embassy, London, May 2009. Delara Darabi, a juvenile offender, was executed on Friday 1 May 2009, even though the Head of the Judiciary in Iran had granted her a two-month stay of execution.



# WHETHER IN A HIGH-PROFILE CONFLICT OR A FORGOTTEN CORNER OF THE GLOBE, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DIGNITY FOR ALL AND SEEKS TO GALVANIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Activists around the world have shown that it is possible to resist the dangerous forces that are undermining human rights. Be part of this movement. Combat those who peddle fear and hate.

- Join Amnesty International and become part of a worldwide movement campaigning for an end to human rights violations. Help us make a difference.

**Together we can make our voices heard.**

I am interested in receiving further information on becoming a member of Amnesty International

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**COUNTRY**

**EMAIL**

www.amnesty.org

Please return this form to the Amnesty International office in your country.

For a full list of the offices worldwide please go to [www.amnesty.org/en/worldwide-sites](http://www.amnesty.org/en/worldwide-sites)

If there is no office in your country, you can become an International Member and join our International Members' online community.

To do this, please visit: [www.amnesty.org/en/join](http://www.amnesty.org/en/join) where you will be able to access joining information and sign up online in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Or alternatively write to:  
Online Communities Team, Amnesty International,  
International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street,  
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

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