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**@FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

**AND ITS WORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**THE BEGINNING**

- Amnesty International was launched in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson.
- His newspaper appeal, "The Forgotten Prisoners", was published worldwide on 28 May 1961 and brought in more than 1,000 offers of support for the idea of an international campaign to protect human rights.
- Within 12 months the new organization had sent delegations to four countries to make representations on behalf of prisoners, and had taken up 210 cases. Amnesty International members had organized national bodies in seven countries. The first year's expenditure was £6,040.
- The principles of strict impartiality and independence were established. The emphasis was on the international protection of human rights: Amnesty International members were to act on cases worldwide and not become involved in cases in their own countries.

**TODAY**

- Amnesty International has more than 1,100,000 members, subscribers and regular donors in over 150 countries and territories and more than 6,000 Amnesty International volunteer groups in over 70 countries.
- There are nationally organized sections in 46 countries, 25 of them in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
- The organization's nerve centre is the International Secretariat in London, with over 270 staff from more than 40 countries. The Secretary General is Ian Martin.
- Amnesty International is governed by a nine-member International Executive Committee (IEC). It comprises eight volunteer members, elected every two years by an International Council comprising representatives of the worldwide movement, and an elected member of the International Secretariat.

**HELPING THE VICTIMS**

- Amnesty International has a precise mandate, detailed in an international statute. Its activities focus on prisoners:

-it seeks the release of prisoners of conscience.

These are people detained anywhere solely for their beliefs and origins, who have not used or advocated violence.

-it works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners.

-it opposes torture and executions in all cases.

-- Since 1961 Amnesty International has adopted or investigated more than 42,600 cases. Each case may involve one individual or many. Of these cases, over 38,750 are now closed.

Amnesty International members around the world work on behalf of prisoners threatened with imprisonment, unfair trials, torture or execution. Last year's activities are an indication of the level of work done every year on behalf of prisoners.

#### In 1990:

-- Amnesty International was working on more than 3,200 cases involving more than 4,500 individuals from countries worldwide; these cases concerned adoption of prisoners of conscience or their investigation as possible prisoners of conscience. Action began on 1,683 new cases involving more than 2,000 individuals.

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-- The good news is that 1,609 cases were closed in 1990.

-- To get emergency help to prisoners and others threatened with torture or death, an **Urgent Action** network of 50,000 volunteers in 65 countries is ready to organize speedy appeals by electronic mail, telex, fax and express mail. In 1990 it went into action 823 times to help people in 90 countries. Each Urgent Action could generate several thousand urgent appeals to the authorities within a matter of days.

-- These appeals included the following: 139 were prompted by reports of torture and 21 in cases where prisoners were in urgent need of medical treatment. 83 appeals were issued in cases of arbitrary arrest, prolonged incommunicado detention, detention without charge or trial or unfair trial.

-- 160 appeals related to extrajudicial executions or "disappearances" and 70 were made on behalf of prisoners sentenced to death. 26 appeals related to death threats and 20 to ill-treatment. Other appeals were issued in cases of death in custody, risk of refoulement, amputation, hunger-strikes and political executions, attempted abductions and harassment.

-- 64 **Medical Actions** were launched to help prisoners in 37 countries. These actions involve about 8,000 health professionals in over 30 countries who appeal on behalf of sick prisoners, those tortured or threatened with the death penalty and on cases of deaths in detention.

-- The number of groups working in a **Regional Action Network (RAN)** exceeded 2,300. RAN members concentrate their work on any one of five regions of the world to assist people subjected to any of the human rights abuses that Amnesty International opposes in almost all of the world's countries. In 1990 groups working in RANs joined more than 160 calls for action.

-- During 1990 Amnesty International issued 134 **major documents** on human rights violations in 62 countries. The reports covered issues ranging from the killing of children in Brazil and Guatemala; wide-ranging human rights abuses in Sri Lanka and Myanmar; torture in Senegal and mass imprisonment of political prisoners in Chad; the killing of Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories and mass executions in Iran; and the ill-treatment of police detainees in Austria.

-- During 1990 the organization sent 72 **delegations** to 49 countries. Delegates discussed Amnesty International's concerns with government authorities, observed political trials and carried out on-the-spot investigations into human rights abuses. The countries visited ranged from Jordan to Nepal and from the USA to Romania. The organization had made over 822 visits to different countries since 1961.

#### In the first six months of 1991:

- Amnesty International was working on more than 2,700 cases involving more than 4,000 individuals from countries worldwide; these cases concerned adoption of prisoners of conscience or their investigation as possible prisoners of conscience. Action began on 607 new cases involving more than 700 individuals.
- The good news is that 753 cases were closed in the first six months of 1991.
- To get emergency help to prisoners and others threatened with torture or death, an **Urgent Action** network of 50,000 volunteers in 65 countries is ready to organize speedy appeals by electronic mail, telex, fax and express mail. In the first six months of 1991 it went into action 385 times to help people in 69 countries. Each Urgent Action could generate several thousand urgent appeals to the authorities within a matter of days.
- These appeals included the following: 99 were prompted by reports of torture and 19 in cases where prisoners were in urgent need of medical treatment. 74 appeals were issued in cases of arbitrary arrest, prolonged incommunicado detention, detention without charge or trial or unfair trial.
- 67 appeals related to extrajudicial executions or "disappearances" and 69 were made on behalf of prisoners sentenced to death. 22 appeals related to death threats and 14 to ill-treatment. Other appeals were issued in cases of death in custody, risk of refoulement, amputation, hunger-strikes and political executions, attempted abductions and harassment.
- 27 **medical appeals** were launched to help prisoners in 18 countries. These actions involve about 8,000 health professionals in over 30 countries who appeal on behalf of sick prisoners, those tortured or threatened with the death penalty and on cases of deaths in detention. The cases included doctors and health workers who had themselves been arrested for their political opinions or their involvement in the work of human rights bodies.
- The number of groups working in a **Regional Action Network (RAN)** exceeded 2,300. RAN members concentrate their work on any one of five regions of the world to assist people subjected to any of the human rights abuses that Amnesty International opposes in almost all of the world's countries. In the first six months of 1991 groups working in RANs joined more than 103 calls for action.
- During the first six months of 1991 Amnesty International issued 66 **major documents** on human rights violations in 34 countries. The reports covered issues ranging from **detention without trial** in China, India, Laos, Libya and Rwanda, **unfair trials** in Kuwait, the Republic of Maldives, Morocco and South Korea; **torture and ill-treatment** in Colombia, Peru, Turkey, Sudan, India, Honduras, Tunisia and Kuwait; **extrajudicial executions** in Cambodia, Honduras, Indonesia, Philippines, and Sri Lanka; **long-term imprisonment** in Indonesia, Morocco, Taiwan, Viet Nam; human rights violations against groups such as **conscientious objectors, health workers and women**; and a report on attacks on human rights violations during the Gulf War.
- During the first six months of 1991 the organization sent 36 **delegations** to 30 countries. Delegates discussed Amnesty International's concerns with government authorities, observed political trials and carried out on-the-spot investigations into human rights abuses. The countries visited ranged from Ghana to Germany and from the United Kingdom to Malaysia. The organization has made over 958 visits to different countries since 1961.

#### THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE

Every year, Amnesty International produces a global report which details human rights violations against men, women and children in all regions of the world. The 1991 annual report, which detailed abuses during 1990, is indicative of the kinds and levels of abuses against people every year. According to that report:

#### Prisoners

- Prisoners of conscience - jailed solely for the peaceful exercise of their basic human rights - were held in some 80 countries.
- More than 55 countries detained political prisoners without charge or trial and 44 jailed political prisoners after unfair trials.

### **Torture and ill-treatment**

-- Torture and ill-treatment of prisoners were reported in more than 100 countries and deaths attributed to torture, inhuman prison conditions or "suspicious" circumstances in over 40 countries.

### **"Disappearances"/killings**

-- People "disappeared" or were held in secret detention in more than 25 countries. That number includes several of the countries where people "disappeared" in previous years.

-- Suspected government opponents or critics were apparently extrajudicially killed by official security forces or by "death squads" said to be linked to the governments in at least 29 countries.

### **Death Penalty**

-- During 1990 2,029 prisoners are known to have been executed in 29 countries. The true figures are certainly higher. Others were sentenced to death or remained on death row from previous years in more than 60 countries.

-- During 1990 seven countries abolished the death penalty for all offences (Andorra, the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Mozambique, Namibia and Sao Tome and Principe and one (Nepal) abolished it for common crimes.

-- By the end of 1990, 44 countries were abolitionist in law for all crimes, 17 restricted the penalty to exceptional offences, and 25 others had abolished the death penalty in practice.

-- 92 countries and territories retain and use the death penalty for ordinary crimes

-- Four countries (China, Iran, Nigeria and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) accounted for 84 per cent of all executions recorded.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS AND TREATIES WORLDWIDE**

Today an ever-growing human rights constituency is gathering the facts on abuses by governments, taking action to stop them and strengthening the forces necessary to prevent future violations.

-- Over 1,000 domestic and regional organizations are working to protect basic human rights;

-- An increasing body of international human rights agreements hold governments accountable for their actions;

-- 94 governments are now party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and 98 governments are party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These covenants require countries ratifying them to recognize or protect a wide range of human rights;

-- 54 states are now party to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Protocol establishes procedures allowing both individuals and states to present complaints of human rights violations;

-- 9 states are now party 2nd Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty;

-- 56 governments are now party to the United Nations Convention against Torture.

### **THE MONEY**

Amnesty International's funding reflects the movement's independence and its reliance on broad public support. No money is sought or received from governments. The hundreds of thousands of donations that sustain the organization's work come from the pockets of its members and the public.

The international budget for 1991 is over £11,000,000. This does not include funds needed to maintain the operations of the national bodies in individual countries or the costs of the thousands of letters and telegrams sent every month by individual members around the world.

The international budget is spent on professional research by Amnesty International staff into human rights violations worldwide, on delegations that observe trials and make representations to governments, and on the administration of the movement's international publishing, campaigning and development activities.

The international nerve centre for this unique operation, the International Secretariat, runs on just over £90 a minute. Some of the costs:

- launching a life-saving appeal on behalf of a prisoner threatened with torture or death: £40 in telex bills alone;
- running the research, missions and information systems that are involved in taking up the case of an individual prisoner of conscience (average cost): £450 a case;
- sending a delegation to meet government officials and conduct on the spot fact-finding (average cost): £2,140.