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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 over 8,000 Amnesty International volunteer groups (70 countries) in over 70 countries.
- There are nationally organized sections in 51 countries, 30 of them in Latin America + Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
- The organization's nerve centre is the International Secretariat in London, with over 290 paid staff and 90 volunteers from more than 50 countries. The Secretary General is Pierre Sané.
- 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 and the main focus of its campaigning is to:

- free all prisoners of conscience. **These are people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language – who have not used or advocated violence;**
- ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners;
- abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatment of prisoners;
- end extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

Amnesty International also opposes abuses by opposition groups: hostage taking, torture and killings of prisoners and other arbitrary killings.

- **Since 1961 Amnesty International has adopted or investigated more than 43,500 cases. Each case may involve one individual or many. Of these cases, 40,753 are now closed.**

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

At the end of November 1993:

- **Amnesty International takes long-term action on all the concerns reflected in its mandate, including prisoners of conscience. By the end of November 1993 4,337 Amnesty International volunteer groups were working on behalf of 4,962 named individuals and 6,914 unnamed individuals from 98 countries worldwide.**

Rapid action for prisoners and others who are in immediate danger, eg they are facing torture or execution, is mobilized by the Urgent Action network of around 50,000 volunteers in over 75 countries. They are organized through electronic mail, telex, fax, express and airmail to send fast appeals on behalf of those at risk.

By the end of November 1993 525 new actions on 92 countries had been issued to the Urgent Action network. Each Urgent Action can generate hundreds of appeals to the authorities within days of being issued and several thousand within a few weeks. Further information was issued on 448 actions so the network was activated 973 times during the first eleven months of 1993.

The new actions covered a variety of concerns: prisoners whom it was feared might be tortured; those at risk of, or who had been the victim of, extrajudicial execution or "disappearance"; prisoners sentenced to death; and people who had been harassed or had received death threats. Actions included many other concerns, for example: arbitrary arrest, prolonged incommunicado detention, detention without charge or trial, death in custody and risk of refoulement. (Note these concerns are not mutually exclusive, more than one concern may feature on any action.)

Medical office details to end of November 1993

55 Medical Actions were issued for the attention of some 9000 health professionals involved in Amnesty International networks. There are AI medical groups and networks in more than 30 countries appealing on behalf of seriously ill prisoners without access to medical care; prisoners who have been tortured; those who have died in custody from torture or through lack of medical care; in cases of corporal or capital punishment involving the medical profession; in cases where medical professionals themselves become the target of abuses because of their professional or human rights activities.*

- **The number of groups working in a Regional Action Network (RAN) were 2,413. 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. By the end of November 1993 groups working in the 21 RANs joined 178 calls for action.**
- **From January 1993 to the end of November 1993 Amnesty International had issued 124 major documents on human rights violations in 69 countries.**

(The reports covered a range of human rights violations, such as prison massacres at the Casa de Detencao in **Brazil**, a criminal justice system weighted against the Aboriginal people in **Australia**, the failure to protect Haitian refugees in **USA**, torture by the police in **Nepal**, the alleged ill-treatment of foreigners in the **Federal Republic of Germany** and the "disappeared" in **Morocco**.

-- By the end of November 1993 the organization had sent 73 delegations to 58 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 Algeria to Venezuela, from Cambodia to Turkey, from Switzerland to Yemen and included a number of the new republics in the former USSR. The organization has made over 1,200 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 1993 annual report, which detailed abuses during 1992, 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 62 countries. Possible prisoners of conscience were held in 32 countries.
- The number of known prisoners of conscience in those countries totalled 4,400.
- At least 300,000 political prisoners were detained without charge or trial or under administrative detention in more than 60 countries.

Unfair trials

- More than 1,500 political prisoners were imprisoned after unfair trials in at least 30 countries.
- Political prisoners in 20 countries were still in prison after unfair trials in previous years.

Torture and ill-treatment

- Detainees were tortured or ill-treated in prisons, police stations or secret detention centres in at least 110 countries.
- More than 500 people died apparently as a result of torture or inhuman prison conditions or in "suspicious" circumstances in some 48 countries.

Extrajudicial executions

- Suspected government opponents, members of targeted ethnic groups or people living in opposition strongholds were apparently victims of extrajudicial execution in 45 countries.

"Disappearances"

- At least 950 people were reported to have "disappeared" after arrest by security forces in some 25 countries and many others remained "disappeared" in at least 27 countries after "disappearing" in previous years.

Death Penalty

- During 1992 AI learned of 1,708 prisoners known to have been executed in 35 countries and 2,697 people were sentenced to death in 62 countries. The true figures are certainly higher.

- At the end of the year, 44% of countries in the world had abolished the death penalty in law or practice. Forty-seven countries had abolished the death penalty for all offences and 16 for all but exceptional offences, such as wartime crimes. A further 20 countries and territories, while retaining the penalty in law, had not carried out any executions for at least 10 years. (This paragraph is from the Annual report)**
- 106 countries and territories retain and use the death penalty for ordinary crimes. (106 by the end of 1992 and 104 as of 13 April)**
- China and Iran accounted for 82% of all executions recorded by AI in 1992.**

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;
- 120 governments are now party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 122 governments are party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These covenants require countries ratifying them to recognize or protect a wide range of human rights;
- 74 states are now party to the Optional Protocol to the (first) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Protocol establishes procedures allowing both individuals and states to present complaints of human rights violations;
- 19 states are now party 2nd Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty;
- 77 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 1993 is approximately £12,350,000. 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 to 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 £100 a minute. Some of the costs:

- launching a life-saving appeal on behalf of a prisoner threatened with torture or death: up to £25 in faxes and E-mail alone;
- running the research, missions and information systems that are involved in taking up the case of an individual prisoner of conscience (average cost): over £400 a case;
- sending a delegation to meet government officials and conduct on the spot fact-finding (average cost): £2,300.