

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

AI Index: POL 30/038/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 288
19 December 2003

Governments fail to protect human right defenders

During 2003 governments all over the world have failed to protect human rights defenders.

From Europe to the Americas, from Asia to Africa, human rights activists have been subjected to threats, persecution, ill-treatment, unfair trials, torture and even extra-judicial executions, only for defending human rights.

In Mexico, two indigenous environmental activists, Isidro Baldenegro Lopez and Hermenegildo Rivas were detained and charged on the grounds of fabricated evidence. Both were now adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International. Because of his peaceful activities, Hassan Bility was held incommunicado without charge and tortured for almost six months in Liberia. In China, Dr Gao Yaojie, a 77-year-old gynaecologist who began research into the extent of HIV/AIDS has been placed under surveillance by local police and warned against speaking to journalists or other independent researchers. In Miami, dozens of peaceful activists were subjected to ill-treatment by the security forces.

For more information on the situation of human rights defenders all over the world during 2003, please see:

<http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/ENGPOL3012192003>

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>