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## **Amnesty International strengthens presence in West Africa with new regional headquarters**

Amnesty International is to open a West Africa headquarters in Dakar as part of a major drive to increase the impact of its human rights work in the region.

The office is set to open in October 2013, as the world's largest human rights movement looks to build on its 50 years of achievements in mobilising people across the world to act in solidarity for freedom and justice.

Similar regional offices are also set to be established in Nairobi for East Africa and Johannesburg for Southern Africa, as the organization cements its presence across the continent.

"Amnesty International has a proud legacy of defending human rights in Africa. For more than fifty years we have exposed abuses and campaigned to protect human rights across the region and the opening of these new offices will ensure we become an even greater force in defending human rights in Africa," said Netsanet Belay, Amnesty International's Director for Africa.

"The establishment of a West Africa headquarters is part of an over-arching plan to ensure Amnesty International remains at the forefront of the defence of freedom and justice in the region."

This stronger presence will allow Amnesty International to increase significantly the impact of its human rights work by responding faster to events, bolstering research and allowing for greater collaboration with local partner organizations. The new office will include regional and country experts in research, advocacy, campaigns and communications.

By 2015, Amnesty International aims to have a significant constituency of support across Africa as part of a wider initiative to become more globally representative human rights movement. The organization already has 13 national offices in sub-Saharan Africa.

"We are already one of the biggest global human right movements, with more than 3 million supporters, members and activists in over 150 countries. With this transformation, Amnesty International heralds its resolve to strengthen its Pan-African solidarity, membership and support to defend human rights," said Netsanet Belay.

The Amnesty International movement has evolved from seeking the release of prisoners of conscience and ending torture, to campaigning against the death penalty and "disappearances", to standing up for women's rights, to upholding the whole spectrum of rights laid out in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The new regional headquarters in Africa are part of an ambitious programme to adapt and strengthen Amnesty International's presence in the Global South and East. Six regional headquarters are set to open across the world in the next 12 months.

Notes to editors

For further information on the opening of the regional headquarters please contact the Amnesty International Press Office on +44 207 413 5566, [press@amnesty.org](mailto:press@amnesty.org)

For further information on career opportunities in the new regional offices visit: [careers.amnesty.org](http://careers.amnesty.org)  
Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists in over 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of 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.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion, and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.