

## UZBEKISTAN: FAMILY'S JOY AT REPRIEVE

[Photo caption]

Former death row inmate Evgeny Gugin © Private

In April 2004 **Evgeny Gugin's** family learnt his death sentence had been commuted to 20 years' imprisonment. *"We cried and laughed for days and nights out of joy,"* said Evgeny Gugin's grandmother after Evgeny Gugin was transferred from death row to another prison nearer his home. *"We are so happy and want to thank everybody who made this possible."*

This decision came after appeals by Amnesty International (AI) members and a review of the case by the United Nations Human Rights Committee. Evgeny Gugin's mother has claimed that Evgeny Gugin was subjected to mental and physical mistreatment to make him 'confess' before his trial. Evgeny Gugin had been under sentence of death since October 2002 for robbery and murder.

## BRAZIL: SUCCESS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER

[Photo caption]

ELMA NOVAIS © AI

*"I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. It has been a hard struggle since I denounced the murderers of my son. We have suffered a lot of violence and threats. But thanks to the support of each of you, I will carry on, so that justice may be done, so other children will not be killed and so that such crimes will not go unpunished."*

**Elma Novais** thanked members of Amnesty International's Urgent Action network for their letters of support

In January 2003 the Pernambuco state authorities granted Elma Novais 24 hour police protection after receiving thousands of appeals from members of the Urgent Action network. Elma Novais and her family had received threats connected to her legal campaign to bring those responsible for killing her son to justice.

In June 2003, Elma Novais won an appeal hearing against the release of the four policeman accused of murdering her son, and they were re-imprisoned. Elma Novais's son, Josenildo João de Freitas Júnior, was shot dead by men believed to be members of a death squad in 1999.

The state authorities recently admitted to the existence of death squads, and began investigations into over 60 other killings in Pernambuco. Elma Novais's determination and personal courage in resisting intimidation have been a key factor.

## SIERRA LEONE: JUSTICE COMES CLOSER FOR VICTIMS

[Photo caption]

Schoolchildren at the official opening of the Special Court's courthouse © Special Court for Sierra Leone

After years of campaigning, the prospect of justice for some of the thousands of victims of Sierra Leone's civil war has moved closer as trials of the first group of defendants began in June 2004 at the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

Thirteen people, from all groups in the conflict and including former Liberian president Charles Taylor, have so far been indicted. Nine are in custody, and two remain at large, including Charles Taylor who is being sheltered by the Nigerian government. Two have since died.

Amnesty International (AI) has repeatedly argued that there can be no amnesty for crimes under international law and that no one, including a head of state, has immunity from prosecution for such crimes. The Special Court has recently made several historic decisions: it has reasserted that the 1999 amnesty does not apply to these crimes; it has ruled that Charles Taylor has no immunity from prosecution by virtue of his former position as head of state; and it has also confirmed that it has jurisdiction over the crime of recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 years as soldiers.

AI continues to campaign for the just, fair and effective operation of the Special Court and has called for full cooperation by the international community, including surrendering those indicted and ensuring adequate funding.

For more information on the Special Court, go to  
[[http://web.amnesty.org/pages/int\\_jus\\_ict\\_sierra\\_leone](http://web.amnesty.org/pages/int_jus_ict_sierra_leone)]

## VIET NAM: EMAIL PRISONER RELEASED

Le Chi Quang's case was featured in an online campaign

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In June 2004, **Le Chi Quang** was released from prison by the Vietnamese authorities after two years of a four year sentence. One of his "crimes" was sending emails abroad. Amnesty International (AI) welcomes his release, which came after AI members campaigned on his behalf, but thinks that he should never have been arrested and convicted in the first place.

Le Chi Quang was adopted by AI as a prisoner of conscience after he was sent to prison for "carrying out propaganda against the State". According to the official charge sheet the police "caught Le Chi Quang red-handed when he was on the Internet...sending e-mails abroad."

Le Chi Quang suffers from a chronic kidney condition and his health deteriorated while in prison. AI hopes he can now have the medical treatment he needs, although he is believed to remain under house arrest.

## MOROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE PARDONED

[Photo caption]

Former prisoner of conscience Ali Salem Tamek © Private

In January 2004, **Ali Salem Tamek**, a human rights defender from Western Sahara was pardoned along with **Ali Lmrabet**, a Moroccan journalist and around 23 other political prisoners by King Mohammed VI of Morocco. Amnesty International (AI) had campaigned for the release of both men as prisoners of conscience.

AI welcomed the royal pardon, saying "The pardon is a significant step in the right direction. It is the first royal pardon since 2001 to include political prisoners."

Ali Lmrabet was imprisoned for writing a critical article about the monarchy in 2004 while Ali Salem Tamek was imprisoned in 2002 after expressing his views in favour of independence for the disputed territory of Western Sahara.