

February 7, 2015

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

REVIEW 1996

“Je rends grâce à la lumière que nous apportent ceux qui percent les murs de nos cellules avec des stylos.”

“When the first two hundred letters came the guards gave me back my clothes. Then the next two hundred letters came and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming; three thousand of them. The President was informed. The letters still kept arriving and the President called the prison and told them to let me go.”

“Cada palabra que ustedes me expresan a través de sus tarjetas postales y distintas misivas me sirven de aliento para calmar el profundo dolor que representa esta injusta y cruel prisión que me han impuesto por la fuerza los enemigos de la democracia y del respeto a los derechos humanos.”

EDITORIAL

On behalf of the membership and staff of Amnesty International, I am pleased to offer this account of our work during 1996 and provide a look ahead at the campaigns planned for the future. We are proud of our history, including receipt of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, and remain determined to improve our work on behalf of victims of human rights violations and to prevent crimes against humanity from occurring at all.

In 1996 Amnesty International launched two major campaigns with long-term implications for human rights. The China campaign aimed to end the Chinese Government's denial of the rule of law to its own people and to make international businesses planning to invest in the country aware of ways they can contribute to improving the human rights situation in the region. The Turkey campaign's objective was to persuade the government to introduce human rights reforms particularly, in the context of the conflict with Kurdish organizations in the southeast. Both campaigns have received widespread news media coverage and communicated successfully that Amnesty International opposes all abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law regardless of who the perpetrators are; in both countries, the governments have started to introduce legislative reforms.

Also in 1996 Amnesty International sent high-level missions to Afghanistan, Colombia, France, Israel and areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority, Japan, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, the Vatican, Venezuela and Yemen. In discussions with senior officials, we conveyed Amnesty International's concerns as well as specific recommendations for ways in which each of the authorities could improve the human rights situations in their regions. These missions generated great public interest and, in some cases, immediate specific improvements -- such as the South African Government's decision to suspend proposed arms sales to Rwanda. In 1997 we will continue to press countries like China and Nigeria, which now bar visits from human rights monitors, to open their doors to similar missions.

In the later part of 1996 we mobilized our worldwide membership in response to the human rights crisis in the Great Lakes region and pressed for appropriate protective measures to be taken by the governments in the region and by the international community.

The abolition of the death penalty continues to be a major concern for Amnesty International. We used the opportunity of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, to campaign against this form of punishment in the state of Georgia and in the USA as a whole. In 1997 our death penalty focus will move to Africa and southeast Asia.

During 1997 we will also launch a major campaign on the human rights of refugees, as well as actions on Kenya and Guatemala. At the end of the year, we will begin our observance of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998, an initiative we hope will lead to significant growth in the capacity and strength of human rights activist organizations around the world.

We urge you, as you read this review, to think about how you as an individual can support our efforts to see that future generations do not have to fear violations of their basic human rights. Amnesty International is effective because of such choices taken every day by our million-plus members and supporters. I ask you to join us and do what you can to make a difference in the world.

Sincerely

Pierre Sané

Secretary General

OUR MANDATE

Amnesty International is perhaps the best known human rights organization in the world. One reason for this is that while promoting all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Amnesty International retains a recognizable and clear focus for its campaigning based on a mandate to:

- free all prisoners of conscience
- ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners
- abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatment of prisoners
- end extrajudicial executions and “disappearances”
- oppose abuses by opposition groups
- provide relief to needy victims of human rights violations

Amnesty International also places great emphasis on three distinguishing characteristics that make it unique in the human rights world -- membership, internationalism and credibility.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of Amnesty International are part of a movement. The overwhelming majority of Amnesty International's work is done by volunteers -- over one million of them. They include local groups, professional networks, student chapters and other activist structures in 92 countries, as well as individual members in almost 200. It is these volunteers who have developed the techniques to defend people against abuses of power -- the letter-writing campaigns, the Urgent Action Networks, the initiatives to support victims and their families. These and other methods have brought the force of international outrage to bear in thousands of cases since Amnesty International was founded in 1961.

Amnesty International's International Council Meeting, the assembly of membership representatives, every two years sets policy and determines the directions to be taken by the movement. The Council elects an International Executive Committee to carry out its decisions. This democratic system allows every Amnesty International national section to participate in the decision-making process and ensures that the view from the “grassroots” continues to inform the organization's activities.

In 1996 many of Amnesty International's members campaigned for human rights through their links with more than 4,300 locally-based **groups**. The groups organize activities ranging from letter-writing to street theatre, during major international campaigns and in response to particular cases. Several thousand school, university, professional and other groups mobilize particular sectors of society on behalf of Amnesty International's campaigning.

Some 80,000 people are linked to Amnesty International's **Urgent Action Network**, which mobilizes appeals on behalf of individuals whose lives or well-being are feared to be in immediate danger. During 1996 around 500 such actions were initiated on cases in more than 90 countries.

At the end of 1996 Amnesty International groups were working on around 4,000 long-term assignments concerning more than 7,000 prisoners of conscience and other victims of human rights violations. Such assignments typically involve two or three groups stubbornly sustaining letter-writing, publicity and lobbying over several years to uncover the truth about someone who has “disappeared” or to obtain the release of a prisoner of conscience.

INTERNATIONALISM

Amnesty International has members in almost every country of the world, making it one of the largest international non-governmental organizations. Members are not allowed to campaign against violations in their own country to ensure impartiality, but the movement's size means it can combat human rights violations wherever and whenever they are reported. Groups in north America, for example, may be working to free political prisoners in Turkey, while Turkish members may be campaigning to stop deportations of refugees from the USA. Amnesty International is the only human rights organization that collects and maintains information on the human rights situation in every country of the world.

The tradition of internationalism enables Amnesty International to provide groups with culturally effective support. Campaign materials are produced in at least four core languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish). The diversity of Amnesty International's membership itself reaffirms the ideal of universal human rights and refutes the

claim that human rights are solely part of a “western” or “developed world” agenda. Amnesty International members around the world show that human rights are the right -- and the demand -- of people in all the world’s cultures. Increasing Amnesty International’s presence in countries outside the “west” remains one of the organization’s highest priorities.

Amnesty International’s internationalism also explains the organization’s ability to influence the UN, the European Union, the Organization of American States and other intergovernmental organizations. Amnesty International’s International Secretariat, which has offices in London, Geneva, Paris, Hong Kong and New York, and its sections in over 50 countries are an effective and respected lobbying force making sure that human rights concerns are included in the policy-setting and operational activities of these important international and regional organizations. Amnesty International’s worldwide presence will increase further in the next few years as the organization expands its office in Hong Kong and opens new offices in Africa, central America and the Middle East.

CREDIBILITY

Amnesty International has access to a wealth of expertise and contacts among volunteers and staff, that makes its research and reports among the most credible internationally. Without any political agenda except to oppose the abuse of human rights in areas covered by its mandate, Amnesty International can take up cases and causes, and report the truth, “without fear or favour”. The high quality of its research means that its reports and recommendations are taken seriously even by the governments and political groups the organization regularly confronts.

A major source of this credibility is Amnesty International’s independence from governmental influence. The organization’s large membership gives it the financial stability to do its work without government funding. Amnesty International answers to no authority but its members. No government or armed opposition group, right-wing or left-wing, democratic or autocratic, in the “north” or “south”, can be allowed to abuse basic human rights: this basic message would be vulnerable to attack without that independence.

The importance of Amnesty International’s membership, internationalism and credibility is constantly confirmed by the testimony of the political prisoners freed, the refugees granted asylum, the torture victims released and given medical treatment, and the families reunited thanks to pressure from Amnesty International members.

CAMPAIGNING ACTIVITIES

MAJOR COUNTRY CAMPAIGNS

In March 1996 Amnesty International launched the **China** campaign, the organization's largest ever country campaign. Businesses were approached under the slogan "Human Rights are Everybody's Business" to raise awareness of human rights violations in China among companies trading with or investing in the country. Another target audience were the tens of millions of ethnic Chinese who live outside China. All the campaign publications, as well as key international human rights standards, were translated into Chinese. New technology was harnessed: publications were made available on Amnesty International's web site and an interactive floppy disk was produced.

The influence of the Chinese authorities worldwide became evident at the launch in Bangkok, Thailand. Amnesty International's media director and China researcher were arrested by Thai police on their way to the press conference and briefly detained. The Secretary General was prevented by Thai riot police from delivering a copy of Amnesty International's report on China to the Chinese embassy in Bangkok.

TURKEY CAMPAIGN

Amnesty International's campaign on **Turkey**, launched in Istanbul in October 1996, highlighted the rapid increase in "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions in the country, as well as the widespread use of torture by the police and security forces. The government continues to use the conflict in the southeast provinces as an excuse to deny basic human rights to all its citizens. The campaign's theme was that the Turkish state will never be stable until all its people enjoy protection from human rights abuses. Amnesty International organized a speakers' tour with human rights activists from China, Pakistan and the USA, to promote the universality of human rights. Amnesty International also brought together relatives of the "disappeared" from Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon with the Turkish "Mothers of the Disappeared" in a moving vigil in Istanbul.

THEME ACTIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS ACTION

The protection of **human rights defenders** continued to be a high priority for Amnesty International in 1996. The organization focused on Latin America where in recent years hundreds of human rights defenders have "disappeared" or have been threatened or killed for denouncing state violence and political killings.

Amnesty International convened an international conference in Bogotá, Colombia, on the protection of human rights defenders in Latin America. The final report contained a Declaration of Principles on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean and recommendations for a plan of action. Follow up meetings were held in Chile, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela. Amnesty International also set up a Human Rights Defenders Action Network to make rapid responses when human rights defenders are at risk of violations. A regional report on human rights defenders in central America and Mexico was launched on 10 December 1996 in Mexico City.

MEDICAL ACTION

Amnesty International's Health Professional Network, which includes some 10,000 members in 35 countries, undertook a major **medical** action in 1996 to promote the role of doctors and nurses in exposing human rights violations. The action began with a report, *Prescription for Change*, which analysed the duties of health professionals in human rights cases. The campaign then focused on the specific situations in Brazil, India, Israel, Kenya and Turkey. Recommendations were made to the UN, to governments and to professional

associations. The Health Professional Network also urged wider adoption of new Amnesty International Principles for the Medical Investigation of Torture.

The World Health Organization commented that “this is a subject which clearly merits appropriate international and national action”. The need for action was reflected in other responses received from professional associations and the medical press.

WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In 1996 Amnesty International’s work with international organizations focused on preventing and ending human rights violations in particular countries, as well as strengthening international human rights law and intergovernmental institutions.

The grassroots campaign for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court and to support the existing *ad hoc* tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda was stepped up as part of the movement’s work against impunity. In a major breakthrough, the 1996 UN General Assembly decided to convene a meeting of governments in 1998 to turn the draft statute of the international criminal court into an international treaty.

Amnesty International called on governments and the UN to implement the detailed commitments and recommendations adopted at the 1995 Fourth UN World Conference on Women. Efforts were also made to improve the effectiveness of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Amnesty International campaigned for the inclusion or continuation of a strong human rights component in UN operations in places such as Angola, Guatemala and Western Sahara, as well as for the strengthening of the UN human rights presence in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Work with regional intergovernmental organizations included new initiatives with the Organization of African Unity; producing a detailed set of recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of human rights protection in Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other intergovernmental organizations; and repeatedly urging NATO multi-national forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina to search for, arrest and transfer individuals suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

CRISIS RESPONSE

In 1996 central Africa was hit by a new human rights crisis. Hundreds of thousands of people were in mortal danger in eastern Zaire and neighbouring areas as a consequence of fighting which broke out in September and the legacy of past human rights violations.

Amnesty International had been warning for months that the human rights situation in the Great Lakes region was extremely serious. In October the organization mobilized internationally to respond effectively to the crisis. Its members appealed to governments and international organizations to provide human rights protection for refugees and victims of abuses in the region.

Amnesty International sent missions to Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire to interview refugees and human rights defenders. Delegates met government and military officials to present them with Amnesty International’s information and to obtain promises from them to respect human rights.

Amnesty International highlighted mounting evidence that, despite the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and persistent human rights abuses in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire, the trade in weapons to the Great Lakes region had continued. Amnesty International urged governments to stop flows of light weapons and related military equipment to the three countries until it was clear that the equipment would not be used to commit human rights abuses.

FIELD MISSIONS

During 1996 Amnesty International sent over 150 missions to more than 100 countries and territories. Such missions involve court hearings, meetings with government and non-governmental entity officials, research on human rights violations, trial and inquest observations, conferences, contacts with non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and documentation of human rights violations through interviews with victims and other witnesses.

ALGERIA

Amnesty International is the only international non-governmental human rights organization to have sent research missions to Algeria between 1992 and 1996, a period in which over 50,000 people were killed. The 1996 delegation met government officials and representatives of the official human rights body to discuss judicial investigation procedures and specific cases. The delegation also met lawyers, human rights activists, journalists, members of government-backed militias, and victims and families of victims of human rights abuses committed by both security forces and armed opposition groups. Amnesty International confirmed that the pattern of mass human rights abuses in Algeria remains unchanged, with no concrete steps to bring them to an end.

ANGOLA

Amnesty International's 1996 mission to Angola examined the work of the Human Rights Unit of the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) and assessed to what extent human rights were being protected in line with the Lusaka Protocol of 1994. The delegates updated information on the police, prisons and justice system, and gathered case material on torture and killings by the armed opposition group, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (known as UNITA). The delegation met police, lawyers, UNITA women's group members and UNITA's representative of the Joint Commission which implements the peace accords. They also met the General Commander of the Police at a human rights seminar for police and prison officials, during which participants admitted their need for training on such issues. As a result, a human rights program for the police is being developed.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

On one of several missions during the year three Amnesty International delegates took video footage of interviews of relatives of those "missing" from Srebrenica since July 1995. They also met and filmed the leaders of the main organization of relatives of the "missing" and some of the locations from where the "missing" were taken and probably killed. The footage was used in campaigning in July when Amnesty International highlighted the fact that almost none of the 6,000 "missing" had been accounted for in the year since their capture.

GUATEMALA

Amnesty International delegates met government officials to raise issues about investigations into recent human rights violations and the progress of exhumations requested by relatives of those who "disappeared" or were killed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The mission collected information on irregularities in investigations of the 1995 Xaman massacre and on harassment of human rights defenders. It also looked into the implementation of the Global Human Rights Accord signed in 1994 by the government and National Revolutionary Unity. Two memoranda were later presented to the government presenting Amnesty International's concerns about proposed legislation that might offer amnesties to perpetrators of human rights violations.

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES/PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Amnesty International's Secretary General led a high-level mission to urge that human rights be prioritized during the Middle East peace process. The mission called on the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to take steps to ensure observance of international human rights standards. Amnesty International's message was reported widely in Arabic, English and Hebrew news media. Delegates delivered lectures on the role of civil society and visited universities, schools and non-governmental organizations in both Israel and areas under Palestinian Authority control. One concrete result of the mission was to prevent passage of draft Israeli legislation that might have legalized torture in certain circumstances.

MYANMAR (BURMA)/THAILAND BORDER REGION

An Amnesty International delegate interviewed ethnic minority Burmese refugees who had recently crossed into Thailand. The work was part of continuing research into human rights violations in Myanmar. Evidence was collected about extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, rape and other torture of civilians by the Burmese army and the government-sanctioned Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army (DKBA) committed during counter-insurgency operations, which points to a pattern of ethnic and social discrimination. The use of forced labour to support army operations and infrastructure projects, as well as forcible relocations of villages by the army and DKBA, is also extensive.

PUBLICATIONS

Throughout 1996 Amnesty International continued to investigate and document human rights violations in countries all over the world. In addition to major campaign publications produced for international actions (reports, briefings, postcards, photo displays and leaflets), over 2,000 documents were published in at least the four core languages of Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Amnesty International also relaunched in 1996 its web site at <http://www.amnesty.org>, which is now visited by over 700 people every day.

COUNTRY DOCUMENTS, 1996

Afghanistan	El Salvador	Laos	Slovak Republic
Albania	Equatorial Guinea	Lebanon	South Africa
Algeria	Estonia	Liberia	Somalia
Angola	Ethiopia	Libya	Spain
Armenia	France	Macao	Sri Lanka
Australia	Gambia	Malaysia	Sudan
Austria	Georgia	Maldives	Switzerland
Azerbaijan	Germany	Mexico	Syria
Bahamas	Greece	Morocco	Taiwan
Bahrain	Guatemala	Myanmar	Thailand
Belarus	Guinea-Bissau	Nepal	Tonga
Bangladesh	Guyana	Nicaragua	Trinidad and Tobago
Bolivia	Haiti	Niger	Tunisia
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Honduras	Nigeria	Turkey
Brazil	India	Pakistan	Turkmenistan
Bulgaria	Indonesia	Panama	Uganda
Burundi	Iran	Papua New Guinea	Ukraine
Cambodia	Iraq	Peru	United Kingdom
Chad	Israel/Occupied Territories/ Palestinian Authority	Philippines	United States of America
Chile	Italy	Poland	Uruguay
China	Jordan	Portugal	Uzbekistan
Colombia	Kazakstan	Romania	Venezuela
Côte d'Ivoire	Kenya	Russia	Viet Nam
Croatia	Korea (North)	Rwanda	Yemen
Cuba	Korea (South)	Saudi Arabia	Yugoslavia
Cyprus	Kuwait	Senegal	Zaire
Ecuador	Kyrgyzstan	Sierra Leone	Zambia
Egypt		Singapore	Zimbabwe

THEME DOCUMENTS, 1996

Establishment of a permanent international criminal court
 Health professionals and medical activities
 Human rights violations against women
 Human rights and economic development
 Human rights education and standards
 International prevention of torture
 Transfer of military, security and police equipment
 Protection of human rights defenders
 The death penalty

If you would like to receive more information about Amnesty International's publications, please contact your national section -- listed on the back cover -- or write to:
 Amnesty International, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom

1996 PLANNED EXPENDITURE

The contributions provided by Amnesty International sections constitute the major source of income for the International Secretariat (IS) and its related offices, and have been assessed at approximately £17,000,000 for 1996.

The breakdown of the 1996 international budget for operating expenses, as agreed by the International Council Meeting, was as follows (figures are £):

Research & Action

Africa	884 700	One of the key roles of the IS within the movement is to research human rights violations worldwide and present them in reports and action materials to be used by the membership for its campaigning activities. Reports are also distributed to the public and other influential actors.
Americas	763 300	
Asia	837 600	
Europe	755 800	
Middle East	589 300	
TOTAL	3 830 700	

Research & Action Support

Information Resources	591 900	Several departments support this effort by addressing technical issues such as the Amnesty International mandate, international legislation, thematic research and refugees, providing quality information resources and technology.
Information Technology	499 300	
Mandate & Research Standards	445 800	
Legal Issues	483 900	
TOTAL	2 020 900	

Campaigning Activities

International Campaigns and Actions	1 189 100	The IS coordinates specific international campaigns and actions to raise human rights awareness. The work includes international media coverage, direct government approaches by the Secretary General, and cooperation with other organizations.
Media Service	392 100	
High Level missions	291 600	
TOTAL	1 872 800	

Publications & Translation

IS Publications Service	960 000	As part of its effort to mobilize the whole international membership, the IS provides a comprehensive publication and translation service in four core languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish) as well as in other languages as required for international actions and campaigns.
Decentralized Spanish Language Service	432 800	
Decentralized French Language Service	528 600	
Decentralized Arabic Language Service	167 000	
Other language services	125 600	
TOTAL	2 214 000	

Membership Support

Regional Development	1 077 800	The IS is committed to supporting the on-going needs of the movement. It provides grants and technical advice for regional growth and human rights education, and is responsible for organizing decision-making meetings.
International meetings	500 000	
Development, language and technical assistance	917 400	
TOTAL	2 495 200	

Deconcentrated Offices

UN New York Office	121 200	Two offices have been representing Amnesty International's concerns to the UN for several years. The IS also has a research outpost in Paris dealing with concerns in francophone Africa, and an information distribution centre in Hong Kong.
UN Geneva Office	124 200	
Paris Office	115 000	
Hong Kong Office	103 100	
TOTAL	463 500	

Administrative Costs

Finance, Planning & Audit	606 600	Part of the IS annual budget is devoted to the various functions and operating expenses that improve the work environment and ensure the proper use of members' funds. A special effort is made with regards to staff facilities and good employer policies, as well as high quality training to develop staff capacities.
Human Resources	1 322 800	
Office Management	461 000	
Administration expenses	891 500	
Building & Equipment expenses	526 000	
Depreciation	488 000	
TOTAL	4 295 900	

GRAND TOTAL

17 193 000

These figures combine the expenses of Amnesty International Charity Ltd, registered Charity under the UK Charity Act, number 294 230, and Amnesty International Ltd, registered Limited Company under UK Companies Acts, number 1606776. Copies of the complete audited reports may be obtained by writing to Amnesty International, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.

STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

The Office of the Secretary General is responsible for the overall coordination of the International Secretariat and for the support of the Secretary General in his roles as chief executive of the International Secretariat and as spokesperson of the international movement.

The International Programs develop policies and international strategies, manage Amnesty International's response to human rights crises, provide coordination, advice and specialist services in the areas of Amnesty International's mandate, international law, intergovernmental organizations, campaigning, development and media work, and include the two UN representation offices -- Geneva and New York.

The Regional Programs, which monitor human rights in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, develop the movement's regional and country strategies for protecting and promoting human rights. Research teams in each program investigate and analyse allegations of human rights violations and produce the documented materials necessary for Amnesty International's membership to campaign on behalf of individual victims and against patterns of violations. Two regional offices -- in Paris and Hong Kong -- take part in the work of the regional programs.

The Resource Programs provide technical support for Amnesty International's campaigning activities: information technology, information management, telecommunications, post and despatch, translations and publications, as well as human resource management, accounting, facilities management and other administrative services.

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Amnesty International
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Inside Cover

UN medical workers discover thousands of Amnesty International appeal letters sent to President Siad Barre at his palace in Mogadishu, Somalia © Goran Svedestad

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Japanese Group campaigning for the release of a Cuban prisoner of conscience

Indian Groups participating in Amnesty International's "Race for Rights"

School children demonstrating for the launch of the Amnesty International Annual Report 1992

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Amnesty International activists demonstrate at the entrance to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, carrying posters displaying the Urgent Actions sent from the streets of Vienna.

Execution in China © Pascal G./Agence Vu

Girl holding up a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at a human rights rally in Istanbul, Turkey © Z. Aknar/Cumhuriyet

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Rwandese refugees returning from Zaire, Gisenyi, Rwanda

Page 6

Burmese refugees, Thailand

Demonstration by children, Israel and Occupied Territories © Richard Butchins

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Northern Sudanese woman and child © Hutchison