ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY IS A GROUP OF ARTISTS COMMITTED TO PREVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, SAVING LIVES AND PROMOTING A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

MONTHLY BULLETIN

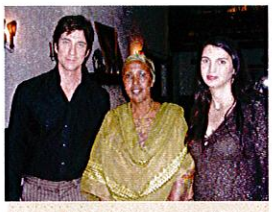
MAY 2005

Welcome to the *Artists for Amnesty Monthly Bulletin*, which will keep you informed on critical human rights issues, cases of individuals at risk, and the life-saving work of Amnesty International. Our Monthly Bulletin will also highlight the efforts of artists on behalf of human rights.

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Artists for Amnesty continues its work to Stop Violence Against Women by raising awareness on the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM). On April 14, Artists for Amnesty joined the ***Ginetta Sagan Fund*** to host a salon on FGM at the home of ***Dylan*** and ***Shiva Rose McDermott.*** The guest of honor for the evening was ***Hawa Aden Mohamed,*** the 2005 recipient of Amnesty International's Ginetta Sagan Fund Award.

Hawa Aden Mohamed & Halle Berry



Hawa Aden Mohamed with hosts Dylan & Shiva Rose McDermott

Hawa is the founder of the Galkayo Education Centre for Peace and Development in northeast Somalia. The Centre works to end FGM which over ninety-eight percent of Somali females have undergone. In addition to its work to end FGM, the organization runs adult education and primary school for over 500 girls and second chance education for girls and women who were unable to go to school during Somalia's civil war.

The Ginetta Sagan Fund (GSF) recognizes and assists women who are working to protect the liberty and lives of women and children in areas where human rights violations are widespread.

CHEVRON TEXACO

On April 27, 2005, representatives of Amnesty International USA's ***Corporate Action Network*** joined concerned shareholders representing over $1 billion at the ***ChevronTexaco*** Annual General Meeting in San Ramon, CA, to express concerns regarding ChevronTexaco's toxic legacy in the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle.

At the meeting, ***Humberto Piaguaje***, a Secoya indigenous leader from the Amazon, faced ChevronTexaco's CEO David O'Reilly to convey how the company's operations have affected this now dwindling and cancer-ridden community. He told O'Reilly, "I may be foreign to you but I am human. The jungle was once a great university, market, and hospital to us. Since ChevronTexaco came our university, market and hospital has been vanishing. I am not here to tarnish your image but to find a solution to this crisis."

Gabriela Jaramillo, representing Amnesty International, explained, "As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'every organ of society' has a responsibility to promote respect for human rights, and this includes powerful multinational corporations like ChevronTexaco."

For more information, please visit:
www.amnestyusa.org/business.

EXPOSE

The 4th Annual Amnesty International Film Festival – West Hollywood, will run from May 24th to 29th at the Directors Guild of America. The festival is co-sponsored by the City of West Hollywood and is supported by the Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Opening night (May 24th) will feature HBO Films' "Strip Search", with ***Glenn Close*** and ***Maggie Gyllenhaal. Sidney Lumet, Tom Fontana*** and ***Barry Levinson*** will receive the ***Artists for Amnesty Excellence in Filmmaking Award.***

The festival program includes: 2005 Academy Award nominee "Twist of Faith", "Shake Hands With The Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire", "The Devil's Miner", "State of Fear, Boxers and Ballerinas", "Liberia: an Uncivil war", and "The Brooklyn Connection." The 26 films and documentaries to be screened explore some of the most important issues in the world today, from the War on Terror to globalization, from corporate accountability to economic disparity, from arms trafficking to human rights abuses in North Korea.

The Amnesty International Film Festival was founded in 1992 and is held annually in several US cities (Seattle, Salt Lake City, West Hollywood, Pittsburgh, Asheville, NC). This year the festival is launching a new partnership with National Geographic in Washington DC in the fall.

For program information: www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest.

REBIYA KADEER

Amnesty International welcomes the release of ***Rebiya Kadeer*** from prison on medical parole. Her release coincided with the US announcement that it would not seek a resolution on China at the current session of the UN Commission on Human Rights. It also shortly preceded a visit to China by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Rebiya Kadeer with her family in the US. © AI

Rebiya Kadeer's success in business earned her a position as an official representative to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and a member of an official advisory body to the National People's Congress in 1998.

Rebiya Kadeer was sentenced to imprisonment for eight years in 2000 on charges of "*leaking state secrets*", having sent newspaper clippings to her husband in the USA.

Rebiya Kadeer's release comes a year and a half before she was due to complete her sentence. According to reports, she is flying to the United States where she will receive medical treatment and be reunited with her family.

Rebiya Kadeer was a Special Focus case for Artists for Amnesty. We would like to give special thanks to members and supporters of AFA who tirelessly advocated for Rebiya's release.

GET UP, STAND UP

© Luis Yansa Frente of Defensa de la Amazonia

For over four decades, Indigenous communities in Ecuador have witnessed multinational oil companies cut through their ancestral lands in search of the country's vast petroleum resources.

According to the 1991 report "Amazon Crude", from 1972 until it left Ecuador in 1992, Texaco intentionally dumped more than 19 billion gallons of toxic wastewaters into the region and was responsible for 16.8 million gallons of crude oil spilling from the main pipeline into the forest.

The report alleges that these actions contaminated both the soil and the groundwater of the communities in the area and will continue to threaten the economic and cultural bases of indigenous peoples survival.

Ecuador's economy is highly dependent on oil. The government is the owner of all non-renewable resources. According to Ecuador's Ministry of Energy and Mines, oil represents 40% of the country's total exports and it finances more than a third of the government's National Budget.

Because of Ecuador's dependency on oil, it is imperative that all oil operations comply with the highest social and environmental standards to ensure that oil's economic importance does not overshadow the importance of human rights.

Send a message to the Board of Directors of ChevronTexaco that the company must take responsibility for its actions. Please include the following information in your letter:

- In 1998, Texaco conducted a limited cleanup through an agreement with the Ecuadorian government, but its effectiveness is being challenged.
- That several medical studies confirm the devastating health impacts that this widespread pollution has had on the communities living near the areas operated by Texaco.
- When Chevron merged with Texaco in 2001, the new company became accountable for Texaco's liabilities.
- Shareholders have asked the Board of Directors to report on new initiatives by management to address the health and environmental concerns of the communities affected by oil-related contamination in the area where Texaco operated in Ecuador.
- That Board Members can take the necessary steps to ensure that the company undertakes such a report.
- Urge them to take a personal interest in this case to restore the health and environment of the communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon and ensure that this disgraceful chapter in the history of the company never repeats itself.

TAKE ACTION

Send your letters to::

ChevronTex aco Board of Directors
6001 Bollinger Canyon Rd.
San Ramon, CA 94583

WOMEN IN PRISON

In conjunction with netfeatures, Amnesty International USA introduces "Too Much Time - Women in Prison" an online documentary by photographer ***Jane Evelyn Atwood.*** This documentary centers around Atwood's black and white photographs of women in over 40 prisons around the world. The photos are accompanied by audio interviews recounting her experiences throughout the project and the stories of the women she photographed.

Please visit www.amnestyusa.org/stopviolence/toomuchtime to view the documentary.

STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Oscar-winning actress ***Halle Berry*** recently spearheaded a fundraiser for a cause close to her heart and helped raise $100,000 for the ***Jenesse Center***. Jenesse Center is the oldest domestic violence intervention program in South Central Los Angeles. The Center was founded in 1980 by five women who were survivors of domestic violence. Their mission is to provide victims of domestic violence with a comprehensive and centralized base of support to assist them in addressing their immediate crisis and changing the patterns of their lives.

Photo by Eric Charbonneau for Berliner Photography.

Ms. Berry is pictured (above) with actress Sheryl Lee Ralph; Karen Earl, Executive Director of the Jenesse Center; and Lena Cole Dennis, Director of Outreach.

Joining Ms. Berry for the evening were board members from the Center, local business owners and actress Sheryl Lee Ralph who acted as auctioneer soliciting donations from the crowd.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 24TH - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT FILM - *STRIP SEARCH,* DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA, *7:30pm*

The film explores the stories of two different suspects, who are questioned and then strip-searched by government officials, in an attempt to protect the public from an imminent terrorist attack. The film will be followed by a panel discussion on the War on Terror with the filmmakers and other guests.

JUNE 26 - UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF THE VICTIMS OF TORTURE, MARYMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL, *2:00pm*

Keynote address by Karius Rejali of Reed College, noted expert on torture and state violence. The program will also include survivor testimonials and cultural performances.

AFA Bulletin edited by Bonnie Abaunza and Jamie Skaluba

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