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

VOLUME III

APRIL 2003

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.

WAR IN IRAQ

As widespread looting and disorder continue in many parts of Iraq, including Baghdad, Amnesty International is reminding the Coalition forces, as occupying powers, of their specific responsibilities under international human rights and humanitarian law.

An elderly man is carried out of Basra on March 29. The population of Basra has been without water or food supplies for some time. © Odd Anderson/AFP

As forces of an occupying power they should urgently take measures to enforce law and order in the areas under their control, specifically by preventing acts of pillage, destruction, and violence to persons. The US and UK authorities were respectively warned in advance of the conflict, including by Amnesty International, that there was a grave risk that the fall of the Iraqi regime might precipitate such disorder and grave human rights violations, including reprisal killings. The Coalition forces must live up to their responsibilities and do all in their power to protect the rights of all the people in Iraq.

In addition, the health situation in Iraq is very critical with many hospitals, especially in Baghdad, unable to deal with the very high number of casualties. Access to health care and medicine is becoming very difficult as stocks are running low. There are acute shortages of badly needed drugs such as pain-killers, antibiotics and anesthetics. The Coalition forces also have the obligation to ensure the provisions of food and medical supplies to the inhabitants in the areas under their control. They are also required to maintain the medical and hospital establishments and services, public health and hygiene.

INTERNATIONAL LAW REGARDING THE SITUATION

Article 43 of the Hague Regulations spells out the specific responsibilities of occupying powers under international humanitarian law. These include the duty to restore and maintain public order and safety.

Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that " to the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate."

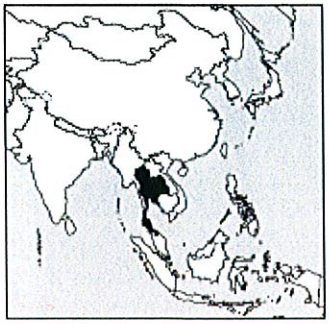
CUBA: HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

In yet another blow to respect for human rights, Cuban authorities have ended a three-year *de facto* moratorium on executions by sending three men to their deaths before an official firing squad. These executions come on the heels of the mass arrest and summary trials of at least 75 Cuban dissidents -- most of whom received shockingly lengthy prison terms ranging up to 28 years. Many of those arrested were writers and journalists.

The executions amount to clear violations of international human rights standards. Not only do they signal an end of Cuba's widely-heralded *de facto* moratorium on executions, but mark a level or repression that has not been seen since the 1960s. What is equally of concern is that the men were given a summary trial, and their appeals to the supreme court and the Council of State were dealt with in a cursory and wholly inadequate manner. They were shot and killed less than a week after their trial began. The three men, **LORENZO ENRIQUE COPELLO CASTILLO, BARBARO LEODAN SEVILLA GARCIA,** and **JORGE LUIS MARTINEZ ISAAC**, were among a group who reportedly hijacked a Cuban ferry with several dozen passengers on board on 2 April and tried to force it to the United States. The incident,the third hijacking in two weeks in Cuba, ended without bloodshed, after several days' standoff between Cuban security forces and the hijackers. Over the last four weeks, Cuba has reversed significant human rights progress made over a period of years. This represents a return to extreme repressive measures in use decades ago which cannot be justified and must be stopped.

ON THE FRONTLINES

Actor **MIA KIRSHNER** continues work on her project to document the lives of refugee women and children around the world, with her latest trip to Thailand and the Thai/Myanmar border region. She left earlier this month, and will be traveling in the region documenting the plight of women and girls forced to work in brothels as well as those trafficked outside the country, child soldiers, and the conditions found at the refugee camps on the Thai/Myanmar border. Mia previously visited Ingushetia to document the lives of women and children refugees from Chechnya. Both trips are part of a larger project to create a book expressing the voices of those people that Mia encounters. Proceeds from the book will benefit Amnesty International.



GET UP, STAND UP

PASSOVER ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

"To fight for human rights is to save our own souls."
- Rabbi Heschel

The holiday of Passover commemorates the emancipation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. With its emphasis on freedom from oppression, this ancient holiday finds modern-day parallels in the work of Amnesty International.

Anti-Semitic graffiti on the wall of the Jewish Community Center in Ulyanovsk. The graffiti reads, "Don't pollute our land."

In many societies, those who are perceived to be "different" face discrimination. This discrimination can take many forms, ranging from subtle slights to violent assaults. All forms of discrimination are a rejection of the inherent dignity and the inalienable rights that are the birthright of all members of the human family.

On April 17, 2002 the Jewish Community Center of Ulyanovsk in eastern Russia was vandalized by individuals who painted the image of a Star of David hanging from a hangman's scaffold. The words "Don't pollute our land" were scrawled above the chilling scene. On January 19, 2003, a group of skinheads reportedly attacked the community center. According to Russian television reports, teenage skinheads armed with metal chains hurled bottles into the windows of the center in broad daylight and chanted anti-Semitic slogans.

TAKE ACTION

Please send messages of support in English, Russian or Hebrew to the Jewish Community Center.

Igor Kabakarov
Chairman of Ulyanovsk Jewish Community Center
Rossiiskaia Federatsia
432063 g. Ulyanovsk
U. Lenina, 105
Dabakarovu I.
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Please urge Russia's Procurator General to take swift action to protect the community center against further attacks and threats.

Vladimir Ustinov
Rossiiskaia Federatsia
103793 g. Moskva K-31
Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d15a
Prokuratura Rossiiskoi Federatsii
Generalnomu prokurora, Ustinovu V.
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Please send your letters by May 15, 2003

JUAREZ MURDERS: ENDING THE VIOLENCE

On April 8, 2003, the government of Mexico was put on notice that it must put an end the torture and killing of the women of Juarez, Mexico. V-Day, Amnesty International and Equality Now, sent a letter to President Fox, authored by **EVE ENSLER** (V-Day) and Bonnie Abaunza (Amnesty International) calling on the Mexican government to "take swift and direct action to find the murderers and stop this deliberate horrific femicide." Amnesty International would like to thank those who joined us in demanding an end to the killing and justice for the victims:

CAROLE BLACK
NICOLAS CAGE
GLENN CLOSE
SANDRA CISNEROS
BENICIO DEL TORO
CALISTA FLOCKHART
LAURA FLORES
JANE FONDA
MELANIE GRIFFITH
SALMA HAYEK
ANGELICA HUSTON
HARVEY KEITEL
PAT MITCHELL
ESAI MORALES
LOURDES PORTILLO
DANIELA ROMO
SUSAN SARANDON
MERYL STREEP
TRUDIE STYLER
GLORIA STEINEM
BETH SWOFFORD
MARIO VELASQUEZ
PAULA WAGNER
HOWARD ZINN
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LATINO PRODUCERS

and many others . . .

WE CAN WAIT NO LONGER. IT IS AN OUTRAGE. WE CANNOT STAND BY AS MORE BODIES APPEAR.

To take action, please visit:
http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/index.asp

SPECIAL EVENTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WEST HOLLYWOOD FILM FESTIVAL

MAY 28 - JUNE 1
DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA

CESAR AND RUBEN: The Cesar Chavez Story (now playing)
written by: **ED BEGLEY, JR.,** featuring songs by **RUBEN BLADES, PHIL COLLINS, DAVID CROSBY, PETER GABRIEL, DON HENLEY, ENRIQUE IGLESIAS, JONI MITCHELL, SANTANA, STING,** and others.
El Portal Theater. For information call: 818.508.4200.

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

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