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

APRIL 2006

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.

celebrating artistic freedom

On March 5, Artists for Amnesty joined the ACLU Foundation of Southern California, Artists for a New South Africa and The City of West Hollywood for the fourth annual Celebration of Artistic Freedom Academy Awards® Viewing Party. The dinner was held at Pearl Restaurant with the After Party at The Factory.

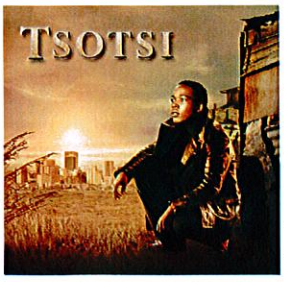
Comedian Paul Rodriquez emceed the evening and actor Shaun Taub of *Crash* was present to receive the Artistic Freedom Award on behalf of the film for its depiction of race relations in this country.

Mira Sorvino with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate José Ramos Horta

Mira Sorvino accepted the Artist of Conscience Award for her work as Amnesty International's Ambassador for the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign. Mira has lobbied Congress to end the ethnic cleansing in Darfur, Sudan, has raised awareness about the murders of women in Juarez, Mexico and has called upon legislators to put an end to human trafficking.

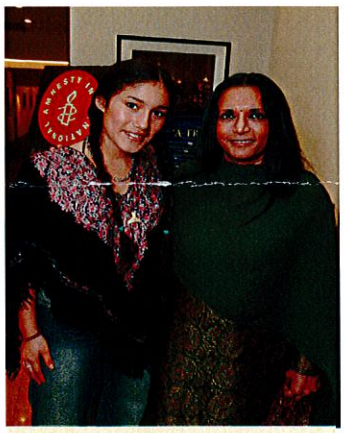
Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta, Foreign Minister of Timor Leste, was the special guest for the evening. The gifts for the evening were hand woven boxes made by widows from the poorest province in Timor in a co-operative that was financed by award money from the Nobel Peace Prize, which was given to Dr. Ramos-Horta in 1996. The women of the co-op are widows who lost their husbands during the Indonesian military occupation of Timor. The co-op is the sole means of support for these women.

tsotsi



Artists for Amnesty and *Artists for a New South Africa* hosted the Los Angeles Premiere of the film *TSOTSI*, directed by Gavin Hood, at the Pacific Design Center on February 22nd. The screening was hosted by actor Alfre Woodard. *TSOTSI* was awarded the 2005 Academy Award® for Best Foreign Language Film.

water



Q'orianka Kilcher with Deepa Mehta

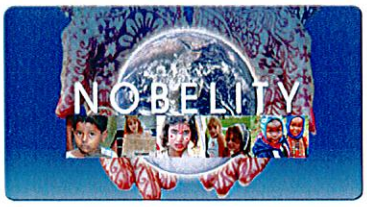
On March, 8, International Women's Day, Artists for Amnesty hosted a screening of the film *WATER,* directed by Deepa Metha. The screening was hosted by actor Mia Kirshner who spoke about ongoing violence against women throughout the world.

WATER is the profoundly moving story of India's "widow houses," where women of all ages are taken to live apart from society following the deaths of their husbands. The story of *WATER* follows three widows who dared to stand up for themselves during the independence movement led by Mahatma Ghandi.

Writer/Director Deepa Mehta participated in a Q & A after the film along with Amnesty International USA Board member and India Country Specialist, Govind Archaya. *WATER* will be released in select cities on April 28th. For more information, please visit

www.amnestyusa.org/water

nobelity

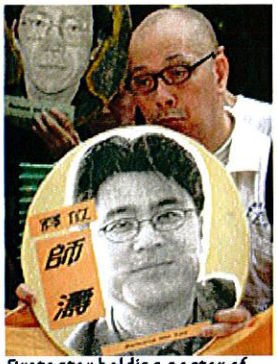


Nobelity follows filmmaker Turk Pipkin's personal journey to find answers about the future of our planet 50 years from now and the kind of world our children and grandchildren will inherit. *Nobelity* takes a powerful cinematic look at the world's most pressing problems through the eyes of nine Nobel laureates from disparate fields including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Jody Williams from the International Campaign to Ban Land Minds, and Joseph Rotblat who was given the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to diminish the use of nuclear weapons. 2005 Nobel Peace laureate Wangari Maathai will host the Los Angeles Premiere of *Nobelity* on April 23, 2006 at the Kirk Douglas Theater. For more information:

http://www.nobelitythemovie.com

get up, stand up

YAHOO! AIDING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN CHINA



Protestor holding poster of imprisoned journalist Shi Tao © AFP

Shi Tao, an Internet dissident from China, was recently given a 10-year prison sentence, solely for the legitimate exercise of his right to seek, receive and impart information, as guaranteed under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. But Shi Tao was not only a victim of the Chinese government's repressive tactics, he also fell prey to the unscrupulous business practices of a powerful American multinational corporation. Yahoo! willingly complied with the Chinese government, handing over personal user information which helped secure Shi Tao's arrest.

Amnesty International raised our concerns with Yahoo!, and recently received a response from them which reads, in part:

"In this particular case, the PRC government ordered Yahoo! China to provide user information and Yahoo! China complied with applicable PRC law."

The company also states, "The choice in China or other countries is not whether to comply with law enforcement demands for information. Rather, the choice is whether or not to remain in a country. We balance the requirement to comply with laws that are not necessarily consistent with our own values against our strong belief that active involvement in China contributes to the continued modernization of the country – as well as a benefit to Chinese citizens – through the advancement of communications, commerce and access to information."

In fact, Yahoo! and other Internet companies operating in China have far more than the two choices offered above. It remains to be seen how Yahoo! is benefiting Chinese citizens, since all of its services in China comply with the same standards adhered to by their Chinese competitors. What we do know for a fact is that Yahoo!'s operation in China has contributed to at least one severe case of human rights abuse. The Chinese Government is keeping pace with technology, finding new ways to control access to information at every turn. By complying with this censorship, companies like Yahoo! are sending a clear message to Chinese citizens that they endorse such practices. Yahoo!'s letter does not respond to the concerns raised by Amnesty, nor does it address the additional "choices" that Yahoo! does indeed have in China, as detailed in our letter.

TAKE ACTION

Please send a message to Yahoo! today to let them know that they can't get off the hook so easily. Visit our action page on internet censorship in China to view copies of the letter from Amnesty and Yahoo!'s complete response and to take action online now:

http://www.amnestyusa.org/business/takeaction.html

amnesty report updates

Cuba: Fundamental freedoms still under attack
There are currently 72 prisoners of conscience in Cuba, 60 of whom were arrested during the March 2003 crackdown. Although a total of 22 prisoners of conscience were conditionally released, mainly for medical reasons, imprisonment of government critics has continued during the past two years.

For the full report, log onto:

http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR250012006?open

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Alarming resurgence in recruitment of children in North Kivu
Following a human rights mission to the DRC, Amnesty International has revealed that large numbers of children, some at least as young as twelve, are once again being recruited to serve as fighters in the conflict province of North-Kivu, eastern DRC.

For the full report, log onto:

http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR620092006

Below the Radar: Secret Flights to Torture and 'Disappearance'
This new report documents how the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) used private aircraft operators and front companies to preserve the secrecy of rendition flights and "black site" detention. Rendition is the extralegal transfer of people from one country to another in ways that bypass all judicial and administrative oversight. Since September 11, 2001, Amnesty International believes that the U.S. government has rendered perhaps hundreds of individuals for the purposes of interrogation and detention to countries with dubious human rights records.

For the full report, log onto:

http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR510512006

upcoming events

APRIL

DEVIL'S MINER
Free Screening in association with ITVS and the City of West Hollywood. April 26, 7PM, Pacific Design Ctr.
RSVP: 310.815.0450 ext. 107

Amnesty International USA's Annual General Meeting
April 28th—30th, Portland, Oregon. Special Concert for Darfur, Saturday, April 29. For details, please visit:
www.amnestyusa.org/agm

MAY

Salon: Human Trafficking in Serbia and Montenegro
May 3, 2006. By invitation only.

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