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 VI

AUGUST 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.

ENDING THE ILLEGAL ARMS TRADE

The human cost of the international arms trade is immense. Whether delivered into the hands of armed groups or abusive regimes, the ready availability of illegal and unregulated arms fuels conflicts that cost lives, imperil livelihoods and restrict liberty. In Liberia, Afghanistan, Rwanda, and in scores of other countries, weapons sold illegally continue to flow across borders to those who use them for torture, repression, and atrocities. The weapons are supplied by individual arms dealers in pursuit of profit and by governments who willfully overlook the misery these arms shipments cause in their destination countries.

It's time to control the arms trade.

A young man stands close to the mass grave where members of his family were killed and buried after an attack in the Ituri Region, Democratic Republic of Congo. © AFP

In October 2003, Amnesty International and Oxfam will join forces to campaign for regulation of the global arms trade to prevent the flow of weapons to violent groups and abusive governments. We will create worldwide grassroots pressure on governments to support an International Arms Trade Treaty, which will establish critical safeguards against the illegal trafficking in weapons and require governments to halt the supply of weapons to human rights abusers. The campaign will include a launch report, several missions and actions, and online activities over the next 6 months. AI and Oxfam have also committed to long-term work on this issue.

Here are some of the facts:

- **More than 500,000 people are killed each year by guns — that's one person every minute.**
- **There are more than 600 million arms on the planet, with $839 billion spent worldwide on the arms trade.**
- **Most casualties of arms use are civilian and guns are ever more often ending up in criminal or untrained hands.**
- **In the last four years, U.S., United Kingdom and France earned more income from arms to developing countries than they gave in aid. Up to 90 percent of illegal small arms start in the state-sanctioned trade.**

JOE FIENNES lends his support to the campaign.

GET INVOLVED! The participation of everyone is very important to the success of the campaign. You can lend your endorsement of this campaign by contributing your name, photo and or quote to the Million Faces Project, a global photo-petition for an International Arms Trade Treaty. If you would like to become involved please contact Bonnie Abaunza, who is spearheading this campaign in Los Angeles. PH: 310.815.0450

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

JUAREZ

On August 11, Amnesty launched its latest report "Intolerable Killings" on the murders of women and girls in Juarez, Mexico. On Thursday, July 24, 2003, the Los Angeles Times ran an article about the assignment of 300 federal agents to Ciudad Juarez to "bolster a police force that has proved incapable of halting a decade-old string of rapes and killings of women[.]" The article states that the decision to send enforcements to Juarez was the result of the international outcry from organizations, like Amnesty International, calling for an end to the brutal killings of the women of Juarez. It is not a coincidence that this response comes on the heals of a letter that many of you signed and was sent to the Mexican government in March calling for protection of the women and girls of Juarez. On July 10, Amnesty International and VDAY held a special briefing on the murders in Juarez at Creative Artists Agency. We would like to thank all of the artists and industry professionals who attended the briefing. On behalf of the women of Juarez, we thank you for taking action to defend their lives.

MYANMAR

We also asked you to sign a petition on behalf of **DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI**, Nobel Peace Prize winner and the democratically elected leader of the Burmese people. She now, as she often has in the past, sits under house arrest following an attack on her and members of the National League for Democracy on May 30, 2003, in which an estimated 70 people were killed and 200 injured. Over 25,000 signatures including those of international artists including **SEAN CONNERY, BENICIO DEL TORO, FOREST WHITAKER, ISABEL ALLENDE, ARIEL DORFMAN, ALICE WALKER, EDWARD ASNER, INGRID OLIEU,** and many others, were presented to the government of Myanmar on Wednesday, July 30. Nobel Peace Laureate **JOSE RAMOS HORTA**, who works closely with the Artists for Amnesty program, is personally advocating for her release. We would like to thank all of the artists and activists from Europe, Latin America, Asia and North America who have joined forces to bring an end to the unjust imprisonment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other democracy activists in Myanmar.

GET UP, STAND UP

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE RIGOBERTA MENCHU TUM AND HER FOUNDATION UNDER ATTACK

Rigoberta Menchú Tum at her appointment as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador June 21, 1996. ©UNESCO

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of **RIGOBERTA MENCHU TUM, FRANCISCO MENCHU,** and **GUSTAVO MEONO BRENNER,** director of the human rights organization the *Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum* (FRMT), and for other staff members of the FRMT in Guatemala City. On August 11, Amnesty International reported that Rigoberta Menchu, founder of the FRMT, and her relative, Francisco Menchu, president of the FRMT, had been attacked and intimidated. Gustavo Meono Brenner had previously faced intimidation and FRMT offices continue to be under surveillance by unidentified individuals, a man and a woman, were seen observing the offices of the FRMT in Zone 1 of Guatemala City.

As a result of its human rights work, the FRMT has constantly experienced serious persecution and harassment. On April 29, 2002, Guillermo Ovalle de León, an administrative worker for the FRMT and nephew of the Executive Director, was killed by gunmen in an alleged robbery. However, Guatemalan human rights groups were concerned that his killing may have been an act of intimidation and not a common crime.

Please write letters expressing your concern for the safety of Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Francisco Menchu, and Gustavo Meoño Brenner and other staff at the FRMT. Urge the authorities to carry out an immediate, impartial and exhaustive investigation into the incidents of intimidation and for those responsible to be brought to justice. Further ask the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of FRMT staff members, in accordance with the wishes of the staff themselves, and remind them of their obligations to human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted in December 1998, and in resolutions by the Organization of American States.

TAKE ACTION

Please send your letters to:

President of the Republic of Guatemala
Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
6a. Avenida "A" 4-41, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
Fax: 011 502 238 3579

Copies to:

Rigoberta Menchú Foundation
1a Calle 7-45, Edificio Soalsa, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
Fax: 011 502 254 4477

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Screening: *TRADING WOMEN*
7:00pm, Wednesday, September 3
Creative Artists Agency 9780 Wilshire Blvd.

"Trading Women" is a documentary examining the growing problem of sex-trafficking. Presented by Artists for Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, and the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.
Seating Limited. RSVP Required: 310.477.5540

THE MEANING OF LIFE
The Complex Theater
6476 Santa Monica Blvd. (East of Highland)

"The Meaning of Life" uses experimental theater to explore different themes that confront us in life. Various performances will benefit Amnesty International.

For tickets, call: 323.857.5745

IMAGING AND IMAGINING: The Film World of Pat York
Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences
Sept. 12 - Dec. 7, 2003

Phillip Noyce © Pat York

Amnesty International Artists for Amnesty member and photo-journalist **PAT YORK** will be exhibiting over 120 images of film figures from the last five decades. The exhibition will bring together a stunning array of photographs featuring individuals from both sides of the camera. Talents as diverse as **KEVIN KLINE, IAN McKELLAN, LIV ULLMANN, GEORGE BURNS, JAMES EARL JONES, JOHN TRAVOLTA, BARBRA STREISAND, BILLY WILDER, SIR BEN KINGSLEY, SEAN CONNERY, JIM SHERIDAN,** and **JANE FONDA,** including many others.

Antoine Fisher © Pat York

IMAGINE
A night of inspiration, poetry and song.

Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica
1260 18th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Sunday, September 14, 2003

imagine

Hosted by **GREG GERMANN** (*Ally McBeal*)
Featuring: Golden Globe winner **CAMRYN MANHEIM,** Executive Director, **DR. WILLIAM SCHULZ.** With musical performances by **CHRISTINE MOURAD** and **KEB'MO'.**

Tickets $25.00.

For information or purchase tickets: 310.815.0450, ext. 107
All proceeds to benefit Amnesty International.

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

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AFA MONTHLY BULLETIN Edited by Bonnie Abaunza and Mario Tafur