Thank you

for supporting our campaigns and helping secure the release of our prisoners of conscience!

As many as 300,000 people are believed to have lost their lives since the conflict in Darfur, Sudan erupted in February 2003. Systematic human rights abuses have occurred by all parties involved in the conflict, but primarily by the Sudanese government and government-backed Janjawid militia. Over 2 million civilians have been displaced by the conflict. The conflict in Darfur has witnessed some of the worst human rights abuses imaginable, including systematic and wide-scale ethnic-cleansing, murder, rape, torture, and enslavement.

Darfur, Sudan

Since January 2005, human rights violations by the Sudanese authorities in Eastern Sudan are fuelling tensions and discontent, which could lead to further human rights abuses.

Eastern Sudanese, like southern and western Sudanese, complain of underdevelopment and marginalization by the central government. With the signature on January 9, 2005 of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement of southern Sudan, the Eastern Sudanese, excluded from the peace negotiations, are demanding a share in power and resources.

Stop Violence Against Women

Every day, women and girls around the world are threatened, beaten, raped, mutilated and killed with impunity. Amnesty activists lobbied for the reauthorization of The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which focuses on improving criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the United States. VAWA passed the House of Representatives and the Senate in late 2005 and a conference committee was appointed.

Women's human rights groups in Turkey, with the support of Amnesty International, won an important victory this fall with the passage of the amended penal code that included several guarantees to help protect women from violence including the recognition of marital rape as a crime.

Human Trafficking

Trafficking of persons is a global human rights problem. Victims are trafficked into a range of forced labor situations including farm work, sweatshops, domestic servitude, and sexual slavery and are subjected to sexual abuse and other forms of violence. Trafficking involves transporting people away from the communities they live in by the threat or use of violence, deception, or coercion for the purpose of exploitation as forced or enslaved workers. According to the US Department of State, each year an estimated 600,000-800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders. Human trafficking is a crime that requires international cooperation to stop.

Trafficking violates a range of human rights, including the rights to: physical and mental integrity; life; liberty; security of the person; dignity; freedom from slavery, slavery-like practices, torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment; family life; freedom of movement; privacy; the highest attainable standard of health; and safe and secure housing.

Control Arms

Small arms are employed in a wide variety of human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and torture.

Indonesian soldiers. © AFP

Small arms were used to help carry out the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda. They also have been widely used to kill, maim, rape, and forcibly displace people in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Small arms have been used to forcibly recruit and arm children to serve as soldiers in dozens of countries around the world.

Abusive armed forces - whether belonging to governments or armed opposition groups - have been implicated in the rampant misuse of small arms in conflicts ranging from Colombia to Sudan. In countries emerging from war, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, the widespread availability of small arms puts security at grave risk, severely undermines the rule of law, and presents a major obstacle to the transition to peace.

Cuidad Juarez, Mexico

Since 1993, almost 400 women and girls have been murdered and more than 70 remain missing in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, Mexico. While Amnesty International commends the recent measures taken by the Mexican government, the response remains inadequate. The review of cases by Special Prosecutor López Urbina has confirmed many instances of neglect and incompetence by Chihuahua's state police and prosecutors. However, none of the cases of murder of young women is being reopened or new investigations undertaken. Furthermore, there are a number of people in prison for the crimes who have credibly alleged they have been tortured and forced to confess to the crimes.

Representative Hilda Solis and Senator Jeff Bingaman have re-introduced Resolutions on the murders of nearly 400 young women in Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico. Both resolutions will help raise awareness of the tragic violence against women in Mexico and will contribute to ensuring that the Mexican authorities seek justice in these cases.

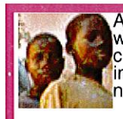
War on Terror/Guantanamo

A Iraqi car passes one of the gates of the Abu Ghraib jail, on the outskirts of Baghdad. © AFP

September 11, 2001, caused many to reflect upon the fundamental values on which this country was founded: freedom of speech, respect for human dignity, freedom of religion, justice for all, and tolerance. It is imperative that the United States stand for the principles of unalienable, universal rights. Otherwise, those who wage war on human rights will have won the battle against freedom. Amnesty International is concerned the "war on terror" not become an excuse to deny human rights.

For over three years Amnesty International has reported allegations of torture, ill-treatment and deaths of those held in US custody in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantánamo, and elsewhere. As reports of secret CIA torture facilities around the world dominate the headlines, the U.S. Congress should affirm the absolute prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and reject attempts to strike core principles of justice and due process.

Child Soldiers



Around the world today, children are increasingly not only war's victims, but also its combatants. An estimated 300,000 children under the age of eighteen are currently participating in armed conflicts in more than thirty different countries on nearly every continent. While most child soldiers are in their teens, some are as young as seven years old. With new weapons that are lightweight and easy to fire, children are more easily armed, with less training than ever before.

Amnesty International encourages demobilization and rehabilitation programs that offer former child soldiers the counseling and vocational training they need to rejoin civilian society and make a new life for themselves. The risk of child recruitment should be reduced by ensuring access to education and age documentation, facilitating the reunification of displaced children with their families, and supporting development programs to provide alternative sources of jobs and

Prisoners of Conscience

A "prisoner of conscience" is someone imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of their beliefs. The term was coined by Amnesty International's founder, civil rights lawyer Peter Benenson, who launched Amnesty International with an appeal on behalf of six prisoners of conscience.

Krishna Pahadi, the former chair of AI Nepal, was released in July following 37,200 AIUSA appeals. Amnesty actions also led to the release of seven other individuals in Nepal and international pressure contributed to the release of 200 POC's in April.

On March 17th, Amnesty International welcomed the release of Rebiya Kadeer, a prominent Uighur businesswoman from the northwest region of Xinjiang who should never have been in prison in the first place. She was detained, tried and imprisoned for eight years in 2000 on charges of "leaking state secrets", having sent newspaper clippings to her husband in the USA.

Dear Friends,

*Now that the holidays are here, everyone begins to reflect on the accomplishments and disappointments of the past year. We at **Artists for Amnesty** would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest THANKS to you for consistently supporting Amnesty International and the human rights movement. Throughout the year, you helped us with our efforts to promote and protect the rights of people around the world who are being persecuted for their beliefs and for exercising rights fundamental to all -- freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

We continue our efforts to raise awareness of the ethnic cleansing in Darfur, the disappearances in Juarez, the femicide in Guatemala, the proliferation of illegal arms, slavery and trafficking, child soldiers, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and illegal detention in the War on Terror, Guantanamo Bay, the death penalty, domestic violence, rape as a tool of war, the threat to educational, social and cultural rights and other egregious human rights violations. We continue to pressure governments for the release of prisoners of conscience.

Although the challenges always seem daunting, there have been so many victories this year – in lives saved, in consciousness raised, in legislation passed. Last year, hundreds of prisoners were released who were unlawfully arrested, imprisoned and tortured. They were released, in great part, because of your active participation. On their behalf, I would like to thank you for all of your efforts to help save lives. Hopefully, those individuals can celebrate this holiday season with loved ones.

As you enjoy your holidays with family and friends, please continue to give voice to the children, women and men who count on you to not forget them. Their hope, and ours as an organization, rests with you.

Happy Holidays,

Bonnie Abaunza *Jamie Skaluba* *Lucia Noyce*

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.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

get up, stand up

2005 HOLIDAY CARD ACTION

Each year during the winter holidays, Amnesty International asks its supporters to send messages of encouragement to prisoners and human rights defenders around the world.

Holidays can mean little to those who fear they've been forgotten by the world. A simple greeting card, however, can bring renewed hope. The prisoners and human rights defenders featured here need your support. Please let them know they are not forgotten.

indonesia

For peacefully raising a flag, Filep Karma, a 45-year-old civil servant, and Yusak Pakage, a 26-year-old student, were sentenced to 15- and 10-year jail terms respectively in Indonesia. In a ceremony held to commemorate Papuan independence in 1962, a flag was raised as a symbol of that independence. When the flag was raised, police advanced on the crowd, firing warning shots and hitting people with batons.
Both men staged hunger strikes during their detention to protest their ill treatment and to challenge the legality of the charges against them. Amnesty International considers both men to be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for their political beliefs.
Please send cards of support **to:**

[prisoners name]
Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Abepura
Jl. Kesehatan
Abepura
Papua
INDONESIA

belarus

ZUBR is a human rights and pro-democracy movement that was started by Belarusian youths who felt the need to rise up in protest against the increasing number and intensity of human rights violations by President Alyaksandr Lukanshenka's government. Since its inception, ZUBR has publicly voiced its demand for the protection of human rights by organizing demonstrations and street theater and by issuing public statements on its website and on brochures that are passed out to people on the street. Members of ZUBR have been beaten by police, arrested, detained and expelled from universities because of their activism, yet the movement continues to grow in size. ZUBR members remain resolute in their demand for a Belarus in which human rights are protected and respected.
Please send cards of support to:

ZUBR
Ul.Serova 17-123
Minsk 220024
BELARUS

morroco

Aminatou Haidar is a long-standing human rights defender who has worked to collect and disseminate information about human rights violations in Moroco and in the territory of Western Sahara, which Moroco controversially annexed in 1975.
Hundreds of protesters took to the streets in May 2005 to denounce perceived heavy-handed policing and to call for Western Sahara's independence from Morocco. Over 100 people were detained as a result and many allege that they were tortured or ill-treated, either to force them to sign confessions or to intimidate them from protesting further. During the following months, security officers arrested Aminatou Haidar reportedly in connection with their openly held view in favor of Western Saharan independence.
Please send cards of support to:

(Aminatou Haidar No. Ecrou 29232)
Prison civile de Laayoune
Laayoune
Shara
Morocco

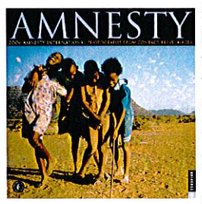
TAKE ACTION

When sending cards:

- **Send simple messages of goodwill, such as "We are thinking of you." DO NOT discuss the political situation or the charges against the prisoners.**
- **Please send non-religious greetings rather than religious-themed cards.**
- **Do not use Amnesty cards or mention Amnesty International.**
- **Mark envelopes "Airmail."**
- **Cards may be sent until January 31, 2006.**
- **Please send us a copy of any reply you may receive.**

shop to support human rights

Amnesty International USA Store



Support our human rights work by shopping for AI merchandise, like the 2006 wall calendar shown here.
To view all of the items available, including what's new this fall, please call 1.800.862.0411 for a catalog or visit our online store:

http://www.amnestyusa.org/store

Amazon.com & Amnesty

Make your Amazon.com purchases through AIUSA's website! Amazon will generously donate 5-10% from each sale to AIUSA to support and expand our human rights work. Just make sure you enter Amazon.com through the AIUSA website:

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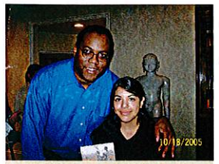
MONTHLY BULLETIN

DECEMBER 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.

child soldiers



Jimmie Briggs & Jessica Barker

CHILD SOLDIERS

On October 18th, Artists for Amnesty hosted a book signing of ***Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go To War*** by author Jimmie Briggs at the home of Lawrence Bender.

Innocents Lost is the culmination of six years of research in Uganda, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Afghanistan. Briggs chronicles the stories of both active and former child soldiers and provides a glimpse into rehabilitation centers where former child soldiers are attempting to regain normal lives.
Jimmie Briggs is the first African-American to be appointed Goodwill Ambassador and Special Envoy for Children and Armed Conflict at the United Nations. In addition, Briggs served as Special Consultant for the United Nations Special Session on Children. Briggs has taught writing and reporting to young people at the International Center for Photography and served as an adjunct professor of investigative journalism at the New School for Social Research in New York.

en route to baghdad

Dr. Jose Ramos Horta

Artists for Amnesty co-hosted a screening of the documentary film, *En Route to Baghdad,* with Independent Television Service (ITVS), KCET and the Museum of Tolerance on November 17th. The event was hosted by 1996 Nobel Peace Laureate and current Foreign Minister of East Timor, Dr. Jose Ramos Horta.

En Route to Baghdad chronicles the life and career of United Nations diplomat Sergio Vieira de Mello and reminds audiences of the impact that one person can have on the world. The film gives viewers an inside look at de Mello's experience in Mozambique, Cambodia and East Timor before his untimely death in an explosion at UN Headquarters in Iraq in August of 2003.

Simone Duarte, Lois Vossen & Dr. Jose Ramos Horta

Dr. Ramos Horta, filmmaker Simone Duarte and ITVS Independent Lens series producer, Lois Vossen participated in a Q&A after the screening.

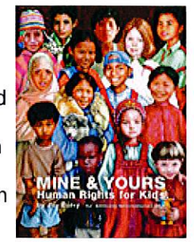
god sleeps in rwanda

Bahar Soomekh & Kimberlee Acquaro

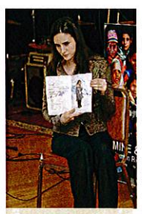
The 1994 Rwandan genocide left the country nearly 70% female, handing Rwanda's women an extraordinary burden and an unprecedented opportunity. A poignant story of loss and redemption, ***God Sleeps in Rwanda*** captures the spirit of five courageous women as they rebuild their lives redefining women's roles in Rwandan society and bringing hope to a wounded nation.

On November 15th, Artists for Amnesty co-hosted a screening of the documentary with the Museum of Tolerance. Filmmaker Kimberlee Acquaro participated in a Q&A after the screening. ***God Sleeps in Rwanda*** is an *Academy Award* finalist for best documentary short.

mine & yours



On November 16th, actress Jennifer Connelly joined author Joy Berry, Amnesty International USA Executive Director, William Schulz and students and teachers from P.S. 1, an elementary school in the Bronx, New York, to launch *Mine &Yours: Human Rights for Kids.* "I welcome the opportunity to bring attention to this critical effort and help create a global human rights culture for our kids," said Ms. Connelly. She donated 700 copies of the book to public elementary schools across the city.


Jennifer Connelly

Mine &Yours is the first picture book on human rights for young children. Written to complement and benefit AIUSA's Human Rights Education program, it is part of a larger educational initiative for primary school students, including the 13-song CD, a teachers' guide and curriculum materials, a calendar and DVD. One hundred percent of the author's royalties will go directly to the Human Rights Education Program of AIUSA.

The New York City launch of *Mine &Yours* will mark the beginning of a series of AIUSA sponsored events in cities across the United States. Events will include book signings, library readings and musical performances.

On December 10th, International Human Rights Day, Artists for Amnesty will launch *Mine & Yours* in conjunction with a choral performance at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Los Angeles.

Jennifer Connelly with students from P.S. 1 in New York.