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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

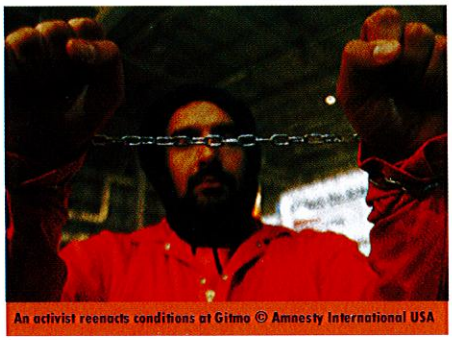
As we begin the new year, Artists for Amnesty wish you, our supporters, a year of peace and personal fulfillment. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude for your continued support for our human rights campaigns and advocacy on behalf of our prisoners of conscience and all our efforts to make the world a safer, more peaceful place. Despite victories this past year, we face extraordinary challenges, from the tragedy in Darfur to violations of human rights by the U.S. government. The knowledge that we can continue to count on you to speak out, take action, and support a human rights agenda that is resonating around the world, fills us with hope that 2007 will be seen as a pivotal year for the protection and promotion of human rights, prisoner releases and victories for international justice.
Once again, many thanks.

BLOOD DIAMOND

On December 6, the *Blood Diamond* premiere was held at the Grauman's Chinese Theater, with an afterparty at the Roosevelt Hotel. The event was a fundraiser for Amnesty International USA and Global Witness. Artists for Amnesty would like to thank Warner Bros. Pictures, the cast and filmmakers of *Blood Diamond*, as well as those who attended, for their support of Amnesty International and our work on child soldiers and conflict diamonds.

From left: Paula Weinstein, Graham King, Marshall Herskovitz, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Connelly, Djimon Hounsou, Ed Zwick, Stephen Collins, and Benu Mabhena.

JUST SAY NO TO GITMO!



An activist reenacts conditions at Gitmo © Amnesty International USA

On Thursday, January 11, Amnesty International activists around the world marked the fifth anniversary of the first transfer of detainees in the war on terror to Guantanamo Bay by holding public actions demanding that the detention facility be closed. From candle light vigils to rallies on the steps of the United States Supreme Court, many used this opportunity to send a united message to the U.S.: Close Guantanamo and restore America's reputation as a global leader for human rights.

This is the America we fought for. This is the America we believe in.
Stand with us by signing the pledge at www.amnestyusa.org/believe.

DICTATOR DIES, CALL FOR JUSTICE SURVIVES

"Let me hazard a prophecy: Of all the battles of his interminable life, the one that the General can no longer hope to win is the battle for the way in which he will be remembered beyond his death, how the hard syllables that form his name— Pin-o-chet— will endure and become solidified in tomorrow's vocabulary. The General has lost, I believe, the battle for control of the language of the future."

- Ariel Dorfman, *Exorcising Terror,* 2002

The funeral of General Pinochet.

The passing of former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet on December 10, Human Rights Day, which commemorates the adoption of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, is a powerful reminder to the world that neither death nor delayed judicial process destroys the chance for justice.

Pinochet ruled Chile between 1973 and 1990, after he ousted President Salvador Allende in a bloody coup on September 11, 1973. Pinochet's legacy is one of human rights atrocities including torture, forced exile, disappearances and assassinations. To make matters worse, the Chilean military granted itself amnesty from prosecution of war crimes in 1978, thus shrouding Pinochet in a blanket of political and judicial immunity. His arrest in London almost a decade ago was a memorable catalyst against his impunity, which eventually led to the repeal of the 1978 amnesty law.

Since 1998, Pinochet has been accused of dozens of human rights violations but never faced trial or owned up to the crimes committed under his rule. Pinochet's passing, however, cannot thwart efforts to bring justice for the atrocities committed under his regime. Dozens of former military personnel, responsible for tens of thousands of human rights violations, continue to live at large. Amnesty International urges Chilean authorities to ensure that the recent death of Augusto Pinochet is not used as an excuse to de-emphasize the importance of legal proceedings against others suspected of thousands of case of human rights violations.

The Chilean government is now uniquely positioned to send a powerful warning to human rights dissidents worldwide: The perpetrators of event the most heinous crimes against humanity can and will be brought to justice.

For more information on how justice can be achieved in the wake of Pinochet's death. Log onto www.amnestyusa.org/askamnesty/live/display.php?topic=76

CALL FOR JUSTICE IN GUATEMALA

Following General José Efraín Ríos Montt's recent announcement that he plans to run for Congress this year in Guatemala, Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) once again called for him to either face trial in Guatemala or be extradited to Spain, where the national court has issued an international warrant for his arrest. Ríos Montt has been charged in Spain with genocide, torture, terrorism and illegal detention, committed while he headed Guatemala's military government in the early 1980s.

Because members of the Guatemalan Congress enjoy immunity from prosecution, comments the former general made to the media that he will run for Congress raise serious concerns for the international campaign to obtain justice for victims of Guatemala's long internal armed conflict.

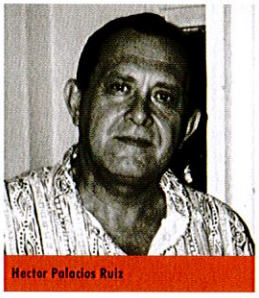
"Ríos Montt ruled Guatemala between March 1982 and August 1983, during which the most extensive human rights violations of the 36-year conflict were committed," said Renata Rendón, AIUSA's Advocacy Director for the Americas.

Guatemala's constitutional court is currently considering Spain's extradition request. Amnesty International urges that the judiciary be left free to act without intimidation or political interference to uphold Guatemala's obligations under international law as well as Guatemalan law to punish those accused of crimes such as genocide and torture.

Take action at http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?

GET UP, STAND UP

CUBA



Hector Palacios Ruiz

Hector Palacios Ruiz, a well known Cuban political dissident, was released by Cuban authorities on December 6, 2006 after more than three years of imprisonment. He was arrested by Cuban authorities on March 20, 2003 during one the Cuban government's most severe crackdowns on the dissident movement since the years following the 1959 revolution.

Palacios was the director of the unofficial *Centro de Estudios Sociales* (Center of Social Studies), and secretary of the reporting committee of the "*Todos Unidos*!", ("All United" coalition—a popular movement of dissident groups in Cuba). He is a longstanding figure among Cuban dissidents, and has been considered by Amnesty International to be a prisoner of conscience following arrests in 1994, 1997, 1999, and 2003.

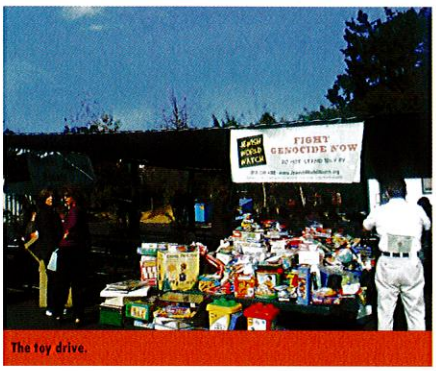
TAKE ACTION

No further action required.

Since June, 2003, Amnesty International declared 75 convicted dissidents of the March 2003 arrest campaign to be prisoners of conscience and called for their immediate release, since the conduct for which the dissidents were prosecuted was non-violent and fell within the parameters of the legitimate exercise of fundamental freedoms as guaranteed under international standards. Palacios is the 15th of these prisoners to be released.

KIDS HELPING KIDS: TOYS FOR DARFUR

In the spirit of holiday giving, middle school students from Milken Community High School and St. Paul the Apostle School packed thousands of fun, culturally sensitive educational toys that were sent to the refugee children of Darfur. The toys collected included building blocks, drawing pads, jump ropes, puzzles, crayons/ colored pencils, baby rattles, balls and coloring books.



The toy drive.

The toy drive was the idea of the Jewish World Watch. Artists for Amnesty sincerely thanks Janice Kamenir-Reznik, Rabbi Leah Kroll, Diane Kabat, Sue Bjelajac, Sister Stella Marie Enright, and Tizia Schwartz Getzug, executive director of the Encino based organization, for spearheading this effort. "Darfurian refugee children have been living in circumstances that are devoid of any semblance of childhood," she said. "The goal of this project [was] to give these children. . . something that children in normal circumstances enjoy and take for granted."

UPCOMING EVENTS

HIP-HOP: BEYOND BEATS AND RHYMES
January 30, 7:30pm
Silver Screen Theater
Pacific Design Center
Screening followed by panel discussion featuring:
Black Thought of "The Roots"
Keith Brown of BET
Dr. Cathy Cohen of the University of Chicago
And others
RSVP REQUIRED: lareservations@yahoo.com

SPIRITUS MUNDI
The photographs of Sacha Dean Biyan
Opening reception
February 8, 7pm
A&I Hollywood
All proceeds of photograph sales to benefit AIUSA
RSVP REQUIRED: LNoyce@aiusa.org

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