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 V

JULY 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.

WHY AM I HERE?

FIRST NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILDREN IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION EXPOSES MISTREATMENT, LENGTHY DETENTION, LEGAL BARRIERS

On June 18, Amnesty International USA released a groundbreaking report, **WHY AM I HERE?** The report charges that children who flee abuse and despair in their home countries and arrive unaccompanied in the United States are often denied access to attorneys, detained for prolonged periods, jailed alongside children with criminal convictions, and subjected to frequent shackling and strip searches. Unless Congress passes pending legislation and allocates more funds to reform a broken system, it will be difficult to affect real change. The national survey of facilities that reportedly house minors indicates that there are serious problems endemic to the system.

© A. Reininger

The report includes interviews with children and their attorneys that reveal the fear, confusion, frustration, and shame the children experience in the United States with regard to the legal process, their treatment, and the conditions in which they are detained. In many cases, children detained for immigration purposes are housed with juvenile offenders, transferred (at times in leg irons and handcuffs) without notification to their attorneys, and subjected to routine strip searches. One child reported being strip-searched 25 times over a five week period. In one instance, he had lost a pen, and was told by the guards that he would be sent back to his country of birth if he could not find it.

For more information about the report and to learn what you can do to help, please visit: http://www.amnestyusa.org

KILLINGS IN JUAREZ, MEXICO

Over the past decade, over 300 women have been found murdered in Juarez, Mexico. Despite the fact that many of the victims show signs of torture, mutilation, and rape, no significant progress has been made into the investigation of these crimes. Amnesty International has been at the forefront of this issue, demanding justice for the women and girls of Juarez.

This past March, Artists for Amnesty joined forces with **EVE ENSLER** and **V-DAY** to increase the pressure on the Mexican government to take action. On July 10, Artists for Amnesty and V-DAY hosted a special briefing on the issue at Creative Artists Agency. The briefing, hosted by Bonnie Abaunza and Eve Ensler, featured UCLA professors **ALICIA GASPAR DE ALBA**, leading authority on the murders in Juarez, and **CHON NORIEGA**, director of the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA . Professor Gaspar is organizing the first international conference on the killings later this year at UCLA, co-sponsored by Amnesty International.

Posters at entrance to a government building protesting the disappearances and lack of police investigation, Juárez, 1998. (© Susan Meiselas/ Magnum Photos)

For more information on how to become more involved in this issue, please call the Artists for Amnesty office: 310.815.0450 x103.

CONFLICT IN LIBERIA

A child soldier wearing a teddy bear backpack points his gun at a photographer in a Monrovia street on June 27. (© Georges Gobet/AFP)

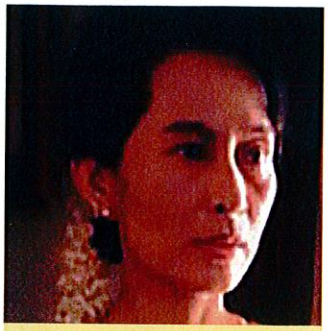
As a result of the violent conflict between the Liberian government and the armed opposition groups Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), hundreds of thousands of people are reported to be without food or shelter. Their situation is likely to deteriorate further as humanitarian workers have been forced to evacuate. As the fighting moves into the Liberian capital of Monrovia, Amnesty International fears that civilians are at imminent risk of being deliberately killed, tortured, or forcibly recruited into military service. Already an estimated 200,000 refugees have fled to neighboring countries. Tens of thousands of Liberian refugees have been shuttled back and forth between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, enduring severe human rights abuses and lack of humanitarian services wherever they go. Liberian refugees that do make it to Cote d'Ivoire are being killed, ill-treated, and harassed by both security forces and armed civilians. Amnesty International calls on all parties to the conflict to ensure that civilians are protected, human rights respected and access to humanitarian assistance unhindered.

GET UP, STAND UP

MYANMAR: END CRACKDOWN NOW!

"In physical stature she is petite and elegant, but in moral stature she is a giant . . . [b]ig men are scared of her. Armed to the teeth and they still run scared".

- *Desmond Tutu on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Award.*



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
© Chris Robinson

More than 100 members and supporters of the National League for Democracy are missing and/or injured after a violent incident on May 30, 2003. These include party head Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; deputy chairman U Tin U, who was reportedly injured during the attack; NLD members and MPs elect, monks and students. Police, soldiers and prisoners reportedly attacked and killed members of the political party who were travelling in the north of Myanmar. Authorities have said that four people died and 50 were injured in the incident, while opposition sources report that an estimated 70 people were killed and 200 injured.

Authorities have stated that they have taken Aung San Suu Kyi and 18 NLD officials into "protective custody," but have not disclosed where or on what legal basis they are being detained. There are serious concerns for their safety. Many of those in detention have reportedly been injured and require medical attention.

Senior members of the National League for Democracy's Central Executive Committee in Yangon, the capital, who were not present during the incident have been placed under house arrest and NLD offices across the country have been shut. Other NLD MPs and members across the country were reportedly detained in early June 2003, and are also believed to be held incommunicado.

Please write to the government of Myanmar and urge officials to immediately and unconditionally release those who have been detained on account of their peaceful political activities on and after May 30, 2003.

TAKE ACTION

Please send your letters to:

Senior General Than Shwe
State Peace and Development Council
Ministry of Defence,
Dagon Post Office
Yangon
Union of Myanmar
FAX: 011 95 1 652 624
Salutation: Dear General

SANTANA JOINS FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS

CARLOS and **DEBORAH SANTANA** have dedicated the 2003 U.S. Summer Santana Shaman tour to educating people about the global AIDS pandemic and **ARTISTS FOR A NEW SOUTH AFRICA (ANSA).** The tour visited 23 U.S. cities, culminating with a grand finale at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles on July 14th. Net proceeds from the entire tour will go to ANSA's Amandla AIDS Fund to support South African organizations working to combat AIDS. An advisory board of South African AIDS experts and activists, chaired by **ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU**, will help direct the money to where it's most needed and can have significant impact.

For more information regarding the Shaman tour and how you can become active in the fight against HIV/AIDS, in your community, in South Africa, and globally, visit ANSA's Web Site at www.ansafrica.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Actor **NORA-JANE NOONE** plays "Bernadette" in *The Magdalene Sisters.*

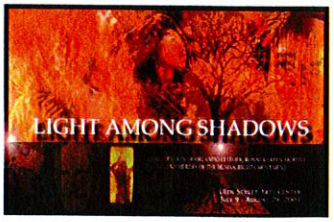
Amnesty International , **MIRAMAX FILMS**, and director **MIKE FIGGIS** are hosting a special screening of director **PETER MULLAN's *THE MAGDALENE SISTERS*,** on **Friday, July 18, 2003** at 7:00pm. The screening will be held at the Arclight Theater (details below), and will be followed by a conversation with the director.

Based on true events, *The Magdalene Sisters* depicts the physical and mental abuse suffered by women who were forced to live in homes maintained by the Magdalene Sisters Catholic Order. The last of these homes closed down as recently as 1996.

Arclight Theater: 6360 Sunset Blvd. Hollywood (West of Vine)
RSVP: 323.822.4393

LIGHT AMONG SHADOWS
Over Troubled Waters: Cultural Response and Human Rights
August 2, 2003 4-6PM

This is a special event of the 2003 Absolut LA International Biennial presented by the 18th Street Arts Center in conjunction with the Institute for Policy Studies and Amnesty International. This roundtable discussion will examine the role of artists in a globalized world, and features: politician **TOM HAYDEN**, musician activist **JACKSON BROWNE**, writer, filmmaker and scholar **SAUL LANDAU**, physician and activist Charlie Clements, and journalist **ANNE-MARIE O'CONNOR**.



18th Street Arts Center 1639 18th Street (1/2 blk. N. of Olympic)
310.453.3711 www.18thstreet.org

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

CONTACT: Bonnie Abaunza
Director, Artists for Amnesty
2999 Overland Avenue, Suite 111
Los Angeles, CA 90064
310.815.0450 babaunza@aiusa.org
http://www.amnestyusa.org

AFA MONTHLY BULLETIN Edited by Bonnie Abaunza and Mario Tafur