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.

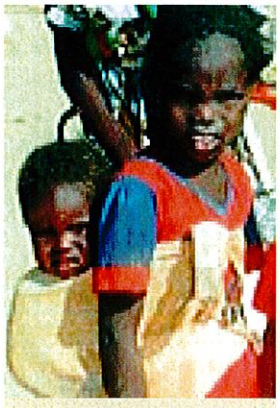
MONTHLY BULLETIN

MAY/ JUNE 2004

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.

SUDAN

For 20 years, Sudan has been in a deadly civil war between the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). However, over the last year, the warring parties have participated in peace talks aimed at ending the war, which brought hopes that a final agreement will be reached in the next few weeks. Unfortunately, just as peace appears at hand for one part of the country, the same human rights abuses that characterized the larger conflict have erupted and plunged the people of Darfur into a nightmare. Over 10,000 people have been killed and over one million displaced in what some are currently calling the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Most of these victims have been civilians. The crisis in Darfur must be addressed quickly and forcefully by the international community, and the government of Sudan must protect the human rights of all its citizens and ensure that its forces and all allied militia cease to commit human rights abuses. For more information, please visit: www.amnestyusa.org.



Displaced Children (© AFP)

ANNUAL REPORT

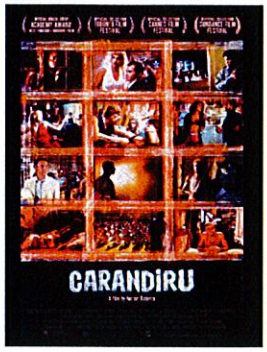
Amnesty International released its 2004 Annual Report on human rights abuses around the world on May 26. Amnesty International denounces armed groups and governments for unleashing weapons of terror – direct attacks, indiscriminate attacks and torture, including rape – on civilian populations worldwide in what it said was the most sustained attack on human rights in 50 years. To learn more about Amnesty International's annual report please visit:

www.amnestyusa.org./annualreport

CARANDIRU

On May 12, Amnesty International opened its 3rd annual Film Festival in West Hollywood with the premiere of **CARANDIRU**, directed by **HECTOR BABENCO**. Hector Babenco was awarded the Artists for Amnesty award for his body of work addressing human rights issues, such as Pixote, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Ironweed and At Play in the Fields of the Lord. **DARYL HANNAH** presented the award. Carandiru is based on the true events surrounding the massacre of 111 prisoners in a Brazilian detention center by the same name in 1992. Since that time, the prison has been demolished and a park has been built in its' place.

The Amnesty International 2004 Film Festival, held at the Directors



Guild of America, featured 37 films in 23 languages. from around the world. While they stand alone as powerful works of art and journalism, these documentary and feature films also offer crucial perspectives and cogent commentary on some of today's most pressing human realities.

Artists for Amnesty would like to offer its special thanks to Hector Babenco, Daryl Hannah, The City of West Hollywood, Sony Picture Classics, Ethos Water, Block-Korenbrot, Inc., The Brazil Foundation and The Directors Guild of America for their support.

SPIN

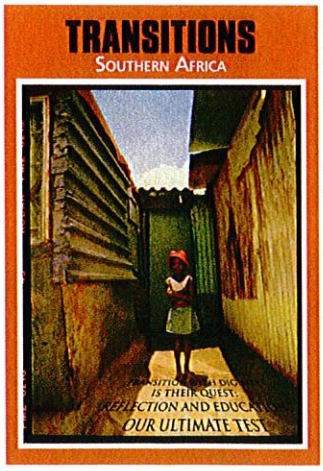
REVOLUTION FITNESS hosted a fundraising event for Artists for Amnesty at its spinning studio in Santa Monica on May 7. Dedicated riders rode for two hours and raised nearly $10,000 in support of Amnesty International's campaign to Stop Violence Against Women. Special thanks goes to **STEPHANIE MOORE** and **CARI BJELEJAC** for making this event possible. Revolution Fitness continues to support the campaign by selling Artists for Amnesty T-shirts. For more information about Revolution Fitness, please visit its website at:

From left to right, Kimberly Lidard, Stephanie Moore, Cari Bjelejac, Kim Masinter, Mark Eckhardt, Riley McAlpine, and Gary Goodrich.

www.revolutionfitness.net

TRANSITIONS

TRANSITIONS Southern Africa is a remarkable collection of exquisite photographs which capture the dignity and humanity of people in Southern Africa by **GORDON CLARK**. A native of South Africa, Clark is a celebrated photographer and television commercial director. The many captured images depict nature and human-kind in the humble traditional existence endemic to the indigenous African people and their transition to urban existence. Many of these people are in dire need of representation, support and education so that they may confront their situation and the challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is devastating their communities. Proceeds from Transitions go to fighting HIV/AIDS in South Africa and caring for children orphaned by the disease.



Transitions is available at amazon.com.

GET UP, STAND UP

RESOLUTE IN DEFENSE OF HER RIGHTS

Kavira Muraulu (© AI)

KAVIRA MURAULU is a farmer in her 50s who lives near a military camp near North-Kivu province, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this area, conflict between armed forces has been raging for more than five years and many woman and girls have been raped, mutilated and killed with complete impunity.

When a solider from the military camp raped Kavira, she complained to his military commander who ordered the soldier to pay her three US dollars in compensation, but took no action when the order was ignored. The rapist and other soldiers then seized her in her fields, tied her up and beat her, knocking out a tooth and injuring her jaw. They only stopped when another woman threatened them with a gun. Kavira was later taken back to the governor's office where he tried, but failed, to persuade her to retract her accusation. The soldiers then attacked her again, this time bayoneting her in the stomach.

Despite continued official pressure and the risk to her life, Kavira is determined to obtain justice and compensation. All the forces involved in the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have used mass rape and other forms of sexual violence to terrorize and subdue civilian communities. In South-Kivu province, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that some 5,000 women had been raped between October 2002 and February 2003, an average of 40 a day.

In many cases, rape victims have also been deliberately injured or killed. Thousands of women and girls have been abducted or forced by desperate poverty to become sexual slaves or frontline fighters. The victims' trauma is compounded by the high risk of HIV infection. The medical and psychological treatment they need is almost completely absent throughout the country. Call on the transitional government, which includes leaders of armed groups, to:

- Clearly instruct forces under their command to end sexual violence against women and girls and to surrender suspected perpetrators to an appropriate, legally constituted judicial authority;
- Establish a systematic and comprehensive program of health and psychological care for survivors of sexual violence, in full collaboration with Congolese and international organizations already providing care for victims locally;
- As part of the wider reform of the national judicial system, enable victims of sexual violence to obtain full redress before the courts; and
- Provide awareness and training programs for members of the security forces, and train judges, prosecutors, the police and others in the criminal justice system on how to respond to complaints of sexual violence.

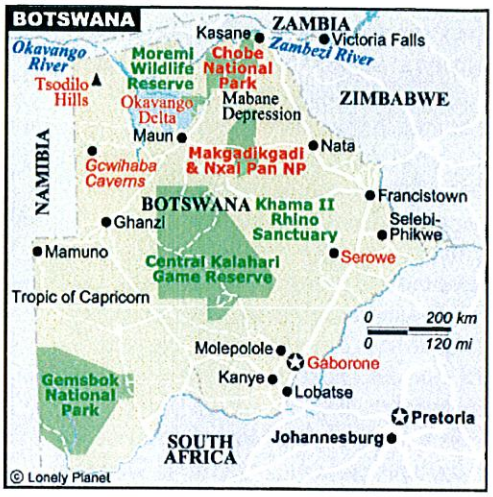
TAKE ACTION

Send your letters to:

M. Joseph Kabila
Président de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema, République Démocratique du Congo

ON THE FRONTLINES

RUPERT ISAACSON is an author and journalist who has been working with the **GANA** and **GWI SAN** or **Bushmen of Botswana** - a 70,000 year-old culture widely regarded as the oldest on the planet. The Bushmen are struggling to be allowed to return to their ancestral land, from which they were illegally evicted by the Botswana Government in 2002. It has taken until this year for the human rights lawyers representing their plight to cut through the wall of obstruction and red tape put up by the Botswana Government and finally get the case to court. In July of this year, Chennels Albertyn, a human rights law firm that won a similar land claim for the Xhomani Bushmen of South Africa in 1999, will bring a land claim for the Gana and Gwi Bushmen of Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) before that country's high court. Meanwhile the Bushmen themselves - one of the few world cultures that does not make war, actively promotes gender equality, and eschews any kind of political structure - sit in relocation camps where they are vulnerable to every kind of abuse. Some have returned to the wilderness of the CKGR, where they risk being arrested by Wildlife Department officials if they are caught trying to pursue their traditional hunting and gathering culture.



Several of the Bushmen will come to the United States in August and September to bring their plight before the United Nations. Rupert Isaacson, whose chronicle of the Bushman history of dispossession, is facilitating the trip. The Healing Land was published in paperback by Grove Press in April 2004. Artists for Amnesty will be working with Rupert Isaacson on an educational salon about the plight of the Bushmen in August.To learn more about the plight of the Bushmen of Botswana and how you can help, please visit: **www.thehealingland.com**..

NICK BERG

Amnesty International strongly condemns the beheading of 26-year-old business man, **NICK BERG** by the armed group Muntanda al-Ansar. Amnesty is also appalled at the public display of the execution by the group. **www.amnestyusa.org/countries/iraq/**

ABU GHRAIB

On May 7, 2004, Amnesty International sent an open letter to President George W. Bush on the question of the torture of detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. The letter calls on the Bush Administration to open the doors to detention centers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, and other undisclosed locations to indepedent bodies. Please visit to see the full text of the letter:

www.amnestyusa.org/countries/iraq/

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