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 VII I

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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.

AMBASSADOR OF CONSCIENCE AWARD

On November 13, Amnesty International presented its first ever ***Ambassador of Conscience Award*** to **VACLAV HAVEL,** former Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience, and the first president of the Czech Republic. The award recognizes exceptional leadership in the fight to protect and promote human rights.

Vàclav Havel (left) with Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney accepting the Ambassador of Conscience Award.

Vàclav Havel personifies the reason Amnesty International was originally created: to campaign for those imprisoned for the non-violent expression of their beliefs. Vàclav Havel is a symbol of the aspirations of peoples everywhere for liberty, hope and respect for human rights. As an emerging playwright in the early 1960s in Czechoslovakia he became well known for his vivid plays about the dehumanizing and repressive bureaucracy of Communist regimes. In 1975, after his production of "The Beggar's Opera" even the members of his theatre audiences became targets of police harrassment. In 1977, Havel co-founded and co-authored *Charter 77*, a manifesto signed by hundreds of artists and intellectuals protesting the government's refusal to abide by the Helsinki Agreement on Civil and Political Rights. For his continuing courage, he was jailed several different times. In 1993, after Czechoslovakia split into two independent republics, he became the first President of the new Czech Republic.

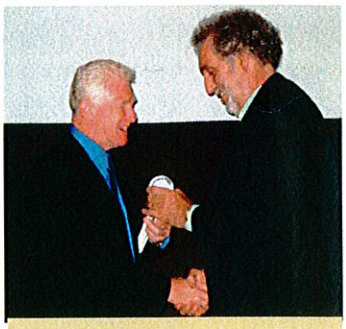
The only lost cause is one we give up on before we enter the struggle. - Vàclav Havel

SPECIAL THANKS

During the last few months, *Artists for Amnesty* has had the opportunity to see many of you at various events we have hosted to raise public awareness and inspire people to take action to defend human rights around the world. None of these events would have been possible without the tremendous help and support we have received from so many of you. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those of you have contributed significantly to our work.

RABBIT PROOF FENCE

Amnesty International has awarded director **PHILLIP NOYCE** with the Media Spotlight Award for the making of ***RABBIT PROOF FENCE***. The film depicts the true story of Aborigine children in Australia making a 1500 mile trek across the Australian outback to return home after being forcibly removed by the Australian government from their families.. Amnesty International hosted a special screening of the film in Reston, Virginia on October 9, where Phillip Noyce was presented with the Media Spotlight Award by Congressman Jim Moran.



Congressman Moran presenting Media Spotlight Award to Philip Noyce.

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY T-SHIRT LAUNCH

From left, Mira Sorvino, Poppy Montgomery, and Tracy Wilkinson at *La Bohème.*

On October 21, Artists for Amnesty celebrated the launch of its first t-shirt designed by **TRACY WILKINSON,** owner and designer of the fashion label **mon petit oiseau**. We would like to extend a very special thanks to special guests **MIRA SORVINO, BRENDAN FRASER, POPPY MONTGOMERY, RACHEL LEIGH COOK,** and **MIA KIRSHNER** for their support, and to **BIRD YORK** for her musical performance. We would also like to thank **LA BOHEME** and **BRIAN O'CONNOR** for their generosity. Lastly, we would like to thank **ALINE MEDIA, ELAINE SENSE PR, FLUENT PR, NICOLAS GOURMET FOOD, MERLINS, LOS ANGELES PROVISION, WORLD WIDE PRODUCE, 3 VODKA, NAKED JUICE** and **FISH WAREHOUSE** for all of their hard work and support.

CONFERENCE ON THE MURDERED WOMEN OF JUAREZ

On October 31, Amnesty International, in conjunction with the Chicano Studies Research Center of UCLA, sponsored the first international conference on the murders and disappearances of women in Juárez, Mexico. Over 1500 people attended the three-day conference, which featured panels with international experts on the situation in Juárez, where over 370 women have been murdered.

Mothers from Juárez and Chihuahua holding photographs of their disappeared and murdered daughters.

We would like to thank **ALICIA GASPAR DE ALBA, CHON NORIEGA,** and **CARLOS HARO** for their tremendous

work and effort to make this conference possible. A special thanks also to **EVE ENSLER** for her keynote address at the conference and her continued commitment to ending violence against the women of Juárez and around the world. We would also like to thank **MICHELE GREENE** for the performance of her song dedicated to the women of Juárez, and the **FOWLER MUSEUM** for hosting our reception and art auction benefiting the victims' families. Earlier this month the ***CRISTINA SHOW*** featured a segment on the murders in Juárez, Mexico. This would not have been possible without the tremendous assistance and support from Creative Artists Agency agent **JORGE INSUA**.

Artist Ame Pitt presents Esther Chavez Cano, Executive Director of *Casa Amiga*, a scarf she designed in honor of the women of Juárez. A portion of the proceeds from the sell of the scarves will help fund Amnesty's work to end the killings in Juárez.

GET UP, STAND UP

JUAREZ ACTIVISTS UNDER THREAT

EVANGELINA ARCE and **MARISELA ORTIZ RIVERA** have been at the forefront of the campaign for truth and justice for the women who have been abducted and murdered in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua State. They have frequently criticized the failure of the authorities to effectively investigate these crimes. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety and that of their families, following recent threats against them. There are also concerns about efforts by the authorities to undermine the work of lawyer **LUZ ESTELA CASTRO**.

Evangelina Arce is the mother of Silvia Arce who has been missing since 1998 in Chihuahua. The State Public Prosecutor's Office reportedly believes that one of eight bodies recently found could be that of Silvia Arce. At 3pm on October 11, a man who said he was from the "Special Prosecutor's Office for the Investigation of the Murders of Women" but who carried no identification papers, went to Evangelina Arce's home. Following this visit however, the Special Prosecutor's Office has denied having sent any representative to Evangelina Arce's home. The family has also denounced the fact that several days before, the occupants of an unmarked car had been seen watching their home. Evangelina Arce identified one of them as a state judicial police officer. Evangelina Arce was reportedly assaulted by three unidentified men on April 30, 2003 and prior to this she had received several anonymous telephone calls.

Marisela Ortíz Rivera who together with Evangelina Arce, works with *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, Our Daughters Return Home, has been threatened on several occasions. On October 24, 2003, her car was followed by two vehicles, the occupants of whom reportedly told her they would kill her and her family if she carried on speaking out. Marisela Ortíz has been threatened on previous occasions.

In the neighbouring city of Chihuahua, the State Public Prosecutor's Office made Luz Estela Castro, a human rights activist and lawyer working on a number of cases of abductions and murders of women in the city, the subject of a criminal investigation on an unrelated case. There is concern that this investigation is unwarranted and may be in reprisal for her work on cases of abducted and murdered women.

Please write letters:

- expressing your concern at recent threats, intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders working on the cases of abducted and murdered women in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, particularly, Evangelina Arce, Marisela Ortiz and their families as well as Luz Estela Castro;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee their safety, in accordance with their wishes;
- calling for an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation into all incidents of harassment and intimidation in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

TAKE ACTION

Send your letters to:

President of the Republic
Lic. Vicente Fox Quesada
Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos
Residencia Oficial de "Lod Pinos"
Co. San Miguel Chapultepec
México D.F., C.P. 11850
MEXICO
FAX: 011 52 5 2 77 23 76 E: webadmon@op.presidencia.gob.mx

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS UNDER ATTACK

Amnesty International's recently released report ***Essential Actors of Our Time: Human Rights Defenders in the Americas*** exposes the intensified persecution against human rights defenders throughout the Americas. Repression against these individuals, although not uncommon, has reached emergency proportions in some cases. To learn more, please visit: http://www.amnesty.org

SPECIAL EVENTS

AILEEN: The Life and Death of a Serial Killer
Special Screening hosted by Amnesty International, January 2004
(details to be announced)

"I knew Aileen over the course of 12 years, and the barbaric nature of her death had a profound effect on me, and led to months of nightmares." - **NICK BROOMFIELD, *Director***

Aileen Wuornos grew up in Troy, Michigan where she endured unbelievable abuse and violence, which continued with her years on the road as a hitchhiking prostitute and ultimately culminated in the murders of seven men. The film is a powerful statement against the death penalty and raises disturbing questions about executing the mentally insane. Aileen was executed on Oct. 9, 2002.

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

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