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

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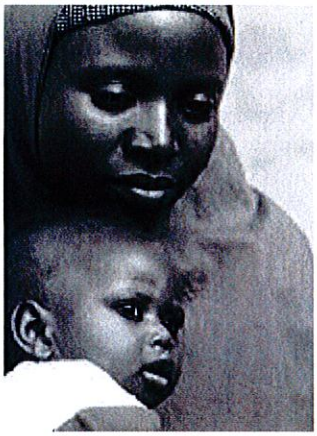
Welcome to the *Artists for Amnesty Monthly Bulletin*, which will keep you informed about critical human rights issues, cases of individuals at risk, and the life-saving work of Amnesty International. Our Monthly Bulletin will also highlight the efforts of artists on behalf of human rights.

AMINA LAWAL FREED

AMINA LAWAL'S DEATH SENTENCE IS QUASHED, BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN ABOUT DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

On September 25, AMINA LAWAL was freed, and all charges against her dropped. According to her defense attorney, the court found that her confession and conviction were not legally valid.

Amina Lawal's ordeal began on March 22, 2002, when she was sentenced to be stoned to death for the crime of adultery after bearing a child outside of marriage.Under new *Sharia Penal Legislations* in force in several northern Nigerian states since 1999, this was sufficient for her to be convicted of the offense of adultery as defined in the new Sharia Penal laws of Katsina state and summoned to appear before a *Sharia* tribunal to respond to this charge which now carries the mandatory punishment of death by stoning. The request of appeal for Amina Lawal's court case went through several adjournments before this last hearing.



Amina Lawal's freedom represents a tremendous victory for the human rights movement; however much work remains to be done. While Amina Lawal's conviction was quashed, an appeal in another court case involving a death penalty sentence against FATIMA USMAN and AHMADU IBRAHIM is still pending with a *Sharia* Court of Appeal in Minna, Niger State.

Consensual sexual relations outside marriage between adults are not recognizable criminal offenses under evolving international human rights standards. The United Nations Human Rights Committee held that: "... it is undisputed that adult consensual sexual activity in private is covered by the concept of 'privacy'." Charging and detaining women for sexual relations violates their right to free expression and association, freedom from discrimination, and the right to privacy.

Amnesty International continues the campaign to call for the abolition of all discriminatory laws and opposes the criminalization of consensual sexual activity between adults in private and the imprisonment of anyone solely on that basis.

Artists for Amnesty would like to extend our gratitude to the artists and industry professionals who joined two million activists in signing our global petition on the Amina Lawal case. Special thanks to **Oprah Winfrey**, who focused on this case and encouraged people to sign the Amnesty petition.

CHILD SOLDIERS SUFFER IN THE CONGO

CONSCRIPTION OF CHILDREN CONTINUES DESPITE ARMED GROUPS' ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY

In a new report, Amnesty International criticized demobilization of child soldiers in eastern Congo as timid and ineffective, charging that among certain rebel groups demobilization is merely a public relations ploy that often ends in the re-recruitment of those recently demobilized. Based on interviews with former child soldiers, the report, *Democratic Republic of Congo: Children at War*, documents the plight of thousands of child soldiers in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The recruitment and deployment of children under 18 in armed conflict is not only abominable, but constitutes a war crime.

Young Congolese fighters with their guns
© Eric Fefferberg/AFP

Children interviewed by Amnesty International after having escaped or been demobilized gave horrifying accounts of how the armed conflicts in the DRC have affected them both physically and psychologically. Kalami, aged 15, a six-year veteran of one of the armed groups in eastern DRC, described his brutal ordeal: *"We were told to kill people by forcing them to stay in their homes while we burned them down. We even had to bury some alive. One day, my friends and I were forced by our commanders to kill a family, to cut up their bodies and to eat them ... My life is lost. I have nothing to live for. At night, I can no longer sleep. I keep thinking of those horrible things I have seen and done when I was a soldier."*

For a copy of the report, please call 310-815-0450.

SPECIAL THANKS

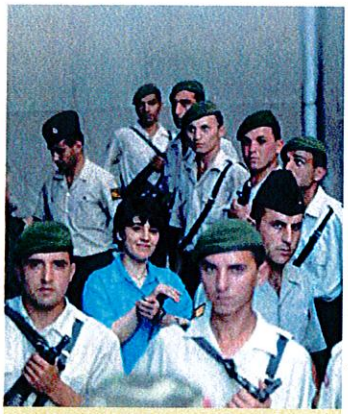
Artists for Amnesty would like to thank Camryn Manheim, Alfre Woodard, Susan Sullivan, Keb' Mo', Christine Mourad, Greg Germann, Dennis Boutsikaris, Vonda Shepherd, Alicia Partnoy, and the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica for their support of our successful fundraising event in September.

VISIT BY SECRETARY GENERAL IRENE KHAN

Artists for Amnesty would like to thank all of the artists and industry professionals who joined us on Oct. 2 for dinner with Amnesty International's Secretary General IRENE KHAN. We would especially like to thank JULIE WARNER for hosting the evening.

GET UP, STAND UP

LEYLA ZANA: PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE



Leyla Zana in handcuffs walks back to a prison car after her retrial in Ankara, Turkey on June 20, 2003. (© AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici)

In 1991, **LEYLA ZANA** became the only Kurdish woman elected to the Turkish parliament. After reciting the required loyalty oath in Turkish, she added in Kurdish that she would "struggle so that the Kurdish and Turkish peoples may live together in a democratic framework." This statement began a movement among Turkey's ultranationalist establishment, which characterized her use of her native tongue, the Kurdish language,which had been outlawed in all media and educational contexts, as a "call to arms."

After nine years in a Turkish prison, Leyla Zana remains defiant. "I am a woman first of all, then a mother, and then a politician. In all these capacities, I vow that I will fight for the fraternity of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples," she told a Turkish court in late March. Her opportunity to speak was made possible by an unprecedented trial that began this spring that will determine if she will go free or continue her 15 year sentence. Amnesty International observers have attended hearings in the ongoing retrial, and they continue to press for the release of Zana and her colleagues: **HATIP DICLE, ORHAN DOGAN**, and **SELIM SADAK** (also Amnesty International Prisoners of Conscience). In the United States, Amnesty International has worked with U.S. Congressional leaders on an initiative that resulted in more than 80 members signing a letter calling for the release of Zana and her colleagues.

The Turkish government for decades has essentially denied the existence of its more than 12 million ethnic Kurds and has forced them to hide their customs, language, and very identity—or face charges of treason. In the 1920s, this discrimination was institutionalized by a Turkish government committed to imposing a uniform national identity. In the 1980s, an armed Kurdish independence movement, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) gained strength. The ensuing civil war cost over 30,000 lives, including over 5,000 civilians. Millions have been uprooted from their homes.

Please send letters to the address below. Urge that the prisoners be immediately and unconditionally released; emphasize that their imprisonment is a violation of Turkey's obligation to Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

TAKE ACTION

Send your letters to:

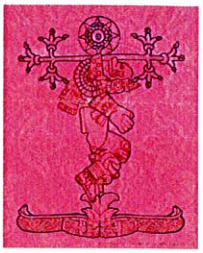
Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Basbakanik
06573 Ankara
TURKEY

SPECIAL EVENTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL T-SHIRT

Amnesty International and *mon petit oiseau* clothing are teaming up for a fundraising endeavor. *Mon petit oiseau*, owned by designer Tracy Wilkinson, is an independent Los Angeles-based fashion label whose clothes are sold in boutiques throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia. She is designing men and women's t-shirts for Amnesty and generously donating the proceeds, some of which will be earmarked for our upcoming international campaign that will focus on ending violence against women. We will host an event on **Tuesday, October 21**, at La Boheme Restaurant in West Hollywood to introduce the Amnesty t-shirts and display the celebrity-designed t-shirts and celebrity-signed Picasso "dove of peace" posters that will be auctioned on eBay in November.

"THE MAQUILADORA MURDERS, OR, WHO IS KILLING THE WOMEN OF JUAREZ?" - OCTOBER 31 THROUGH NOVEMBER 2, 2003



Amnesty International and the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA are hosting an international conference on the unsolved ten-year wave of disappearances and murders of women in the border town of Ciudad Juarez. Speakers include Eve Ensler, Congresswoman Hilda Solis, Esther Chavez Cano (Casa Amiga), Juarez activists, and mothers of some of the disappeared and murdered women.

A hosted reception at the UCLA Fowler Museum on November 1 will include musical performances, poetry readings, and the unveiling of an altar created in honor of the disappeared and murdered woman.

For more information, call the Chicano Studies Research Center at 310-206-5270 or Amnesty International at 310-815-0450 or visit www.sscnet.ucla.net/chavez/maqui_murders

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 21	***Mon petit oiseau* t-shirt launch** Cocktail reception 7:00-10:00 PM La Boheme Restaurant, 8400 Santa Monica Blvd West Hollywood RSVP to 310-815-0450 ext 103
October 31- November 2	**UCLA Juarez Conference** Royce Hall, UCLA
November 5-9	**Amnesty International** **Human Rights Film Festival** Seattle, Washington Contact Dennis Palmieri at 415-291-9233 for details

JOIN ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

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AFA MONTHLY BULLETIN Edited by Bonnie Abaunza and Mario Tafur