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.

BULLETIN

HOLIDAY SEASON 2007/2008

Happy Holidays from Artists for Amnesty
Artists for Amnesty and Amnesty International USA wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season. Thank you for continuing to support our efforts on behalf of human rights around the world.

SUCCESSES

Child Soldiers Accountability Act: In early December, the Senate passed this bill that now makes it a federal crime to recruit child soldiers and allows the U.S. government to deport or deny entry to those found to be drafting child soldiers. Amnesty International worked closely with Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, who introduced the act, and was able to ensure that our recommendations were included in the initiative. Many thanks to Nicolas Cage for his ongoing funding of Amnesty International's advocacy on behalf of Child Soldiers.

New Jersey Abolishes the Death Penalty: Also in December, the New Jersey Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee and the full Senate recognized that it is just wrong to take a life when there is even the smallest possibility of innocence. Amnesty International applauds this historic step toward death penalty abolition.

Dr. Haleh Esfandiari allowed to leave Iran!: Haleh Esfandiari is the Head of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C., and is a well-known advocate of dialogue between the U.S. and Iranian governments. She had travelled to Iran to visit her elderly mother. While on her way to the airport to return to the USA, her taxi was stopped by armed, masked me, who took her passport and her belongings.

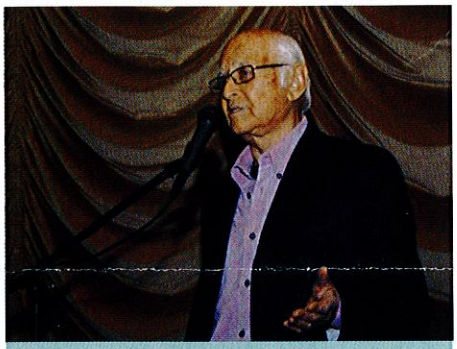
38 Ethiopian political prisoners freed!: Amnesty International welcomes the release of Mesfin Woldemariam, one of 38 Ethiopian opposition party officials, prominent human rights defenders and journalists who were freed. Professor Woldemariam is Ethiopia's most prominent human rights defender and one of AIUSA's five Special Focus Cases. Many thanks to all who took action on his behalf.

Learn more about all our campaigns at www.amnestyusa.org.

WAR/DANCE

Artists for Amnesty and Norman Lear hosted a screening of the film "War/Dance" on October 25, along with ThinkFilm and producers Albie Hecht and Susan MacLaury. The film tells the stories of three school children, all innocent victims of the ongoing violence in Northern Uganda, living in a displaced persons camp. When they are invited to compete in an annual music and dance competition, their historic journey to the national championships is an opportunity to regain a part of their childhood and forget the hardships of their everyday existence. Husband and wife directing team Sean and Andrea Nix Fine, spoke of their personal experiences during the making of "War/Dance" All profits from the film will benefit Acholi children and their families through the efforts of several non-governmental organizations.

Learn more about AIUSA's work on behalf of the rights of children at www.amnestyusa.org/children/.



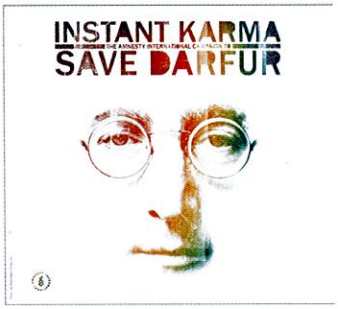
Norman Lear speaks at the War/Dance screening on October 25. © WireImage

For more information about the film and how you can get involved visit www.shineglobal.org.

DARFUR

Darfur: Twenty Years of War and Genocide in Sudan

Warner Bros. Records, Rhino Entertainment, and Artists for Amnesty co-hosted an event on October 29, to educate Warner Music employees about the genocide in Darfur, Sudan and celebrate the achievements of *Instant Karma: The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur.* Leora Kahn and Colin Finlay, editors of *Darfur: Twenty Years of War and Genocide in Sudan,* spoke of their personal experiences in the region, and presented a powerful slide show of images from the book. Former AIUSA board member Rabih Aridi read a special message from Larry Cox thanking all those for the success of the campaign. "A year ago Darfur was a place of despair," read Rabih. "Since then you have played a major part in replacing that despair with hope, and beyond hope to measurable progress. It is a very significant accomplishment, and you should be proud. So on behalf of everyone at Amnesty International, thank you."

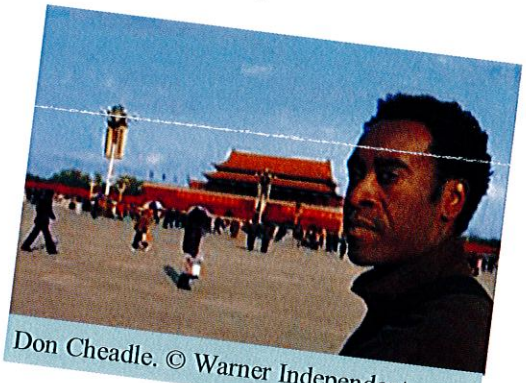


The *Instant Karma* album, featuring 24 artists covering original John Lennon songs, is a call for peace for the people of Darfur. Released on June 12, 2007, it has since gone Gold in many international territories.

DARFUR

"Darfur Now"

On Tuesday, October 30, at the Directors Guild of America, Artists for Amnesty co-hosted a special screening of "Darfur Now", the new documentary depicting the ongoing atrocities in Darfur. The film, directed by Ted Braun, follows the stories of six individuals and their unique efforts to end the crisis, including Don Cheadle, Adam Sterling, Pablo Recalde, Hejewa Adam, Ahmed Mohammed Abakar, and Luis Moreno Ocampo. Among those who came out to support this inspiring film about the power we all possess to change the world and make a difference were Jessica Biel, Thandie Newton, and Adam Sterling.



Don Cheadle. © Warner Independent

As Margaret Mead once stated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Artists for Amnesty would like to thank Participant Productions, Warner Independent, the Directors Guild of America, and all those involved with "Darfur Now".

Learn more about "Darfur Now" and Amnesty International's campaign to save Darfur at www.amnestyusa.org/educate/.

"Darfur Now" producer Cathy Schulman and Jessica Biel. © WireImage

THE KITE RUNNER

Participant Productions, Paramount Pictures, and direc
Marc Forster hosted a screening of "The Kite Runner"
Monday, December 3 to showcase the work of Amnes
International USA, the International Rescue Committee, t
Afghan Relief Organization, and Relief International. All fo
of these NGOs are spearheading their own humanitarian ar
education initiatives with the support of the film and it
producers. Amnesty International USA has created a hig
school and middle school curriculum guide to accompany the
film that has been distributed nationwide with the assistance o
the National Council of Social Studies. Campus screenings
have taken place across the country. To help fund the work of
all the associated organizations, eBay is auctioning specially
commissioned kite tails autographed by more than 30
celebrities, including Richard Gere and Angelina Jolie.

Amnesty International believes that learning about human rights is the first step toward respecting, promoting and defending those rights. To learn more about the Human Rights Education program and download the curriculum, go to www.amnestyusa.org/educate/.

"The Kite Runner" is now playing.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Amnesty International at Sundance: Come visit us at Sundance! AIUSA will be at House of Hype on Main Street from January 18 to 20th.

"Iron Ladies of Liberia": With unprecedented access, this intimate documentary goes behind the scenes with Africa's first freely elected female head of state, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, president of Liberia. The film explores the challenges facing the new president and the extraordinary women surrounding her as they develop and implement policy to rebuild their ravaged country and prevent a descent back into civil war. February 19th. For more information or to RSVP, email LACommunityCinema@gmail.com

"A Promise to the Dead": This compelling documentary follows author and playwright Ariel Dorfman back to his native Chile. *Date and location TBA.*

YOUR SUPPORT

Artists for Amnesty would like to express our gratitude to the individuals who have donated generously to our year-end fundraising appeal. If you have not yet donated, please consider doing so. Your financial support will allow us to continue our life-saving work and your donation is tax-deductible.

AFA Bulletin edited by Lucia Noyce

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