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Leaflets

Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri

Jailed for calling for reform

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

Fifty years ago, the world said “never again” to the atrocities of the Second World War. It declared that all human beings, wherever they live and whoever they are, have rights that must be respected in all circumstances.

These rights were set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), proclaimed by the United Nations on 10 December 1948. They remain absolutely fundamental to everyone’s well-being.

Yet governments worldwide treat these rights with contempt. Soldiers kill unarmed civilians, violating their right to life. Police rape prisoners, violating their right not to be tortured. Officials deny education to children from ethnic minorities, violating their right not to suffer discrimination.

Every one of the UDHR’s 30 basic rights — from the right to equality to the right to participate in cultural life — is violated every day somewhere in the world.

That is why Amnesty International believes that it is time to remind all governments once again of the basic human rights principles that they have promised to uphold.

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**Amnesty International, International Secretariat,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoner of conscience Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri was put in prison because he asked for political reform. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for his immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ His Highness Shaikh 'Issa Bin

Salman Al Khalifa,

Office of His Highness the Amir,

P.O.Box 555, The Amiri Court,

Rifa'a Palace, Bahrain

+ His Excellency Shaikh Muhammad Bin

Khalifa Al Khalifa,

Minister of Interior,

P.O. Box 13,

al-Manama, Bahrain.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri is a well-known religious scholar and writer in Bahrain. He was an elected member of the National Assembly, which was dissolved in 1975 by the Amir (ruler) of Bahrain. Since then Shaikh al-Jamri has been a determined campaigner for the restoration of the National Assembly. The right to participate in government is guaranteed by Articles 19 and 21 of the UDHR.

Hundreds of Bahrainis, including Shaikh al-Jamri and eight other prominent Shi‘a Muslim clerics, were arrested in January 1996 following anti-government protests. The majority were held in incommunicado detention and were at risk of being tortured.

The January 1996 demonstrations were prompted by the security forces’ closure of a number of mosques where prominent Shi‘a clerics had been calling on the government to restore the National Assembly. The protests were part of a series of demonstrations which have swept Bahrain. Shaikh al-Jamri was one of 14 people representing different religious tendencies who in 1994 organized a petition – signed by 25,000 people – calling for the restoration of the National Assembly. The government responded by clamping down heavily on all opposition, and in the months that followed protests escalated, some involving violence. Several thousand women, men and children were arrested and held without charge or trial. Torture and ill-treatment of detainees became widespread and systematic. Today over 1,000 people are detained in connection with anti-government protests, the majority without charge or trial.

In April 1995 security forces cordoned off the area where Shaikh al-Jamri lived, forced nearby residents to leave their homes and arrested him and 18 members of his family. The security forces shot dead two unarmed people protesting about the arrests. When the families of the dead men tried to mourn them in public, they were stopped by the authorities.

Shaikh al-Jamri was held incommunicado, without access to the outside world, until September 1995. His daughter, ‘Afaf al-Jamri, was detained and reportedly beaten, in violation of Article 5 of the UDHR prohibiting torture and ill-treatment.

Shaikh al-Jamri, and other anti-government protesters in detention are prisoners of conscience, held in violation of their rights under the UDHR.

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Your rights can be restricted only in limited circumstances, such as to protect other people’s rights. No person or state may use any of the articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to justify undermining the rights to which we are all entitled.

ARTICLE 19

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

ARTICLE 21

“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country”

You have the right to be part of your government, either by being in it yourself or by choosing others to represent you. Governments have the authority to govern because they represent the will of the people. This means there should be free and fair elections on a regular basis.

‘The reality we now face dictates that we will fail in our duty if we do not speak out frankly to you.’
From a petition to the ruler of Bahrain calling for political reform

Left: Protesters take to the streets in Bahrain

Tek Nath Rizal

The struggle for identity

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoner of conscience Tek Nath Rizal was sentenced to life imprisonment after speaking out for the rights of the ethnic Nepali minority in Bhutan. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for his immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ His Majesty, Druk Gyalpo Jigme

Singye Wangchuck,

Tashichhodzong,

Thimphu, Bhutan.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Tek Nath Rizal campaigned for the rights of the ethnic Nepali minority in Bhutan, rights guaranteed by Articles 1 and 2 of the UDHR which say that all human beings have equal rights and should not suffer discrimination.

More than 90,000 ethnic Nepalese from Bhutan are living in camps in eastern Nepal. The authorities launched a census in 1988 in southern Bhutan, which appeared designed to exclude ethnic Nepalis

from Bhutanese citizenship, in violation of Article 15 of the UDHR – no one may be deprived of the citizenship of their country. The census was combined with a series of highly unpopular measures requiring ethnic Nepalis to adopt northern Bhutanese traditions and culture, in violation of Article 27 of the UDHR protecting cultural freedom. Protests were met with arrests, torture and ill-treatment. Tens of thousands of people felt they had no option but to flee to Nepal. Others were forced to go into exile by the Bhutanese authorities, in violation of Articles 9 and 13 of the UDHR which forbid forcible exile and guarantee freedom of movement.

Tek Nath Rizal, an elected representative on Bhutan's Royal Advisory Council, petitioned the King in 1988 in protest against the census operation. He was arrested and expelled from the Council. He went into exile in Nepal where, in 1989, he helped set up the People's Forum for Human Rights, which distributed leaflets and booklets on the situation in southern Bhutan.

He was arrested in Nepal in November 1989 and handed over to the Bhutanese authorities. He and five other men were accused of organizing a campaign of violent civil disobedience and held in solitary confinement. Tek Nath Rizal was shackled for 20 months. The five others were later released but Tek Nath Rizal remained in detention.

He was tried in 1993 on charges including treason and "sowing communal discord" between different communities. After a 10-month trial he was sentenced to life imprisonment, in violation of Article 19 of the UDHR guaranteeing freedom of expression.

The King announced that Tek Nath Rizal would be pardoned once the problem of the people in the camps in Nepal was resolved, but several years later, Tek Nath Rizal is still in jail.

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ARTICLE 2

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind"

You should not suffer discrimination, or be deprived of any of your rights, because of your race, colour, sex, language, religion or political opinions. When it comes to respect for your basic rights, it should not matter what country you were born in, what social class you belong to, or how rich or poor you are. Everyone should have all the rights in the UDHR.

ARTICLE 15

"Everyone has the right to a nationality"

You have the right to be treated as a citizen of the country you come from. No one can take away your citizenship, or prevent you from changing your nationality, without good reason.

'The great crime of the government at the moment is that it does not respect individual identity. A government is for the people. It is bound to respect individuals.'

from Bhutan: We Want Justice, a booklet from Tek Nath Rizal's organization protesting against the policy of cultural integration

Left: Tek Nath Rizal with his family in 1987

Elsa Constanza Alvarado and Mario Calderón
Killed for defending human rights and the environment

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Elsa Constanza Alvarado and Mario Calderón were killed for their work defending human rights and the environment. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for a full impartial investigation into the killings, for the results to be made public, and for all possible measures deemed appropriate by human rights defenders in Colombia to be taken to protect their lives and security. Write to:

+ Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano,
Presidente de la República,
Palacio Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia.

+ Also write to your own government urging it to monitor the efforts made by the Colombian authorities to bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the early hours of 19 May 1997, five men armed with sub-machine guns broke into the home of two human rights workers and environmental campaigners – Elsa Constanza Alvarado and Mario Calderón – in the Colombian capital, Bogotá. The gunmen opened fire, killing the couple and Elsa’s father, Carlos Alvarado Pantoja, and seriously wounding Elsa’s mother, Elvira Chacón de Alvarado. When the police arrived at the apartment, they found the couple’s baby son sitting beside the bullet-ridden bodies. The killings are a clear violation of Article 3 of the UDHR which guarantees the right to life.

Mario Calderón and Elsa Constanza Alvarado, both university professors, had worked for many years for the Jesuit Centre for Research and Popular Education (CINEP). The work of the CINEP, one of the oldest and most respected human rights organizations in Colombia, focuses on social and economic issues, including environmental protection and the promotion and defence of human rights. Article 26 of the UDHR guarantees the right to an education and stresses the role education should play in strengthening respect for human rights.

Human rights defenders in Colombia are increasingly being harassed and intimidated by the security forces and their paramilitary allies because of their work in exposing human rights violations. This attempt to silence human rights activists is a violation of Article 19 of the UDHR which guarantees the right to freedom of expression. Many have faced repeated death threats and some have been the victims of assaults and attempts on their lives, in violation of Article 5 of the UDHR which prohibits torture and ill-treatment.

The gunmen who shot the Alvarado/Calderón family identified themselves as Judicial Police, but were believed to be members of a paramilitary group. Paramilitary groups, which were declared illegal in 1989, have committed widespread atrocities since they were created by the armed forces in the 1980s. They are responsible for the killings of thousands of civilians, including community leaders, teachers, trade unionists, political activists, indigenous leaders and human rights defenders. Successive Colombian governments have promised to dismantle these groups. But these promises have not been kept, and in recent years killings and other violations by paramilitary groups have escalated dramatically. Official and independent investigations have uncovered strong evidence that the armed forces continue to support paramilitary organizations.

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ARTICLE 3

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

ARTICLE 26

“Everyone has the right to education”

Everyone has the right to an education. It should be free of charge, and everyone should be required to complete at least the early years of schooling. Education at a higher level should be equally available to everyone on the basis of merit. Education should strengthen respect for human rights.

'Mario and Elsa, despite everything that has happened, you will always be with us because you are symbols of peace and of life'

Words on a placard at the funeral of Mario Calderón and Elsa Constanza Alvarado

Front: Elsa Constanza Alvarado

Left: Mario Calderón

Both photos © CINEP

Mirjana Galo

Attacked for human rights work

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Mirjana Galo has been attacked and threatened because of her human rights work. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for human rights workers in Croatia to be protected and call on the authorities to end the climate of impunity in which intimidation flourishes. Write to:

+ President of the Republic of Croatia,

Dr Franjo Tudjman,

Predsjednik Republike Hrvatske,

Pantov..ak 241,

10000 Zagreb, Croatia.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mirjana Galo is the President of HOMO, a non-governmental human rights organization based in Pula, Croatia. She helps run a humanitarian assistance and legal advice centre in the town of Vrhovine, which is in one of the areas (Sector North) formerly under United Nations protection. The area was controlled by rebel Croatian Serb forces from mid-1991 until August 1995, when most Croatian Serb civilians fled a Croatian army offensive, leaving behind a small population of predominantly elderly

people. The advice centre had been assisting the local population (regardless of nationality) with legal advice and promoting the return of refugees and displaced persons of all nationalities to the area, a right guaranteed by Articles 2, 7 and 13 of the UDHR, which promise freedom from discrimination and freedom of movement.

In a country where the scars of inter-ethnic conflict are still fresh, HOMO's activities have attracted threats and physical attacks, in violation of Articles 18, 19 and 20, which guarantee the right to hold and express your views and to gather, meet and demonstrate in support of them.

In July 1996 a bomb exploded 20 metres from the house of a staff member and President of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Ivan Zvonimir „i.ak. It was only by luck that no one was injured.

The same month there was an attempt to set the HOMO advice centre on fire.

In October Mirjana Galo and a journalist colleague were attacked at the centre by an intruder.

In violation of Article 8 of the UDHR, which guarantees the right to effective remedy before the law, and following an increasingly familiar pattern when human rights defenders come under attack, Mirjana Galo's attacker was released from police custody within 24 hours. He reportedly returned to threaten staff members soon after. There was another arson attack in November, but the office was empty and no one was hurt.

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Article 7

“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”

You have the right to be treated by law in the same way as everyone else. You have the same right to be protected by the laws of your country as anyone else.

Article 13

“Everyone has the right to freedom of movement”

You have the right to move about freely within your country. You also have the right to travel freely to and from your own country, and to leave any country.

‘It seems that for people like him to be detained, one of us has to be injured or killed’

Mirjana Galo, speaking after her assailant was released

Left: Mirjana Galo shows her clothes, stained with her assailant's blood

Dita Indah Sari

Workers' rights activist jailed

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoners of conscience Dita Indah Sari, Coen Husein Pontoh and Mochamed Sholeh are in prison for the non-violent expression of their opinions. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for their immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ The Attorney General, Agung Singgih S.H.,

Jaksa Agung, Jl. Sultan Hasanuddin No. 1,

Kebayoran Baru,

Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia.

+ Form an action group and lobby

your own government. Urge it to raise the case with the Indonesian authorities.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Dita Indah Sari, a 24-year-old woman, has been sentenced to five years in an Indonesian jail. For nearly a year she lived with the fear of a possible death sentence, as she was charged under Indonesia's draconian Anti-Subversion Law.

Dita Indah Sari was arrested on 8 July 1996 when she took part in a demonstration calling for a rise in the national minimum wage. As leader of a non-governmental organization, the Centre for Indonesian Workers' Struggle, she has worked steadfastly to improve workers' pay and conditions in Indonesia. Article 25 of the UDHR says that everyone has the right to a decent standard of living.

The demonstration in the East Java town of Surabaya was entirely peaceful, yet it was blocked and violently dispersed by a heavy military and police presence, in violation of Article 20 of the UDHR, which guarantees freedom of assembly.

At least nine students and workers were arrested. Many were beaten, including Dita, in violation of Article 5 of the UDHR which prohibits torture and ill-treatment. Most were released, but Dita and Coen Husein Pontoh, a student who is a leading member of a peasants' union, were kept in custody. The next day more people were arrested, including Mochamed Sholeh, a student activist. All three have links with the People's Democratic Party, a small left-wing group which was accused by the authorities of instigating riots in the capital, Jakarta, in July 1996.

Dita, Mochamed and Coen Pontoh were initially accused of involvement in the Jakarta riots, despite the fact that they were in custody at the time.

Their trial was held in December 1996. At an appeal in July Dita's sentence was reduced to five years' imprisonment and those of Mochamed and Coen Pontoh to three and a half years. Amnesty International believes that they were denied a fair trial, in violation of Article 10 of the UDHR, and that they were convicted for peaceful political activities.

The Indonesian Government imposes heavy restrictions on the right to form and join trade unions, in violation of Article 23 of the UDHR. Only the government-sponsored trade union federation is recognized, and members of independent unions have faced violence, intimidation and arrest.

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ARTICLE 23

"Everyone has the right to work...

Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions"

You have the right to work in fair and safe conditions and to choose your job. You have the right to be paid enough for a decent standard of living, or to receive supplementary benefits. You also have the right to form or join trade unions to protect your interests.

ARTICLE 25

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for... health and well-being"

Every human being has the right to a decent life, including adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services. Society should help those unable to work because they are unemployed, sick, disabled or too old to work. Mothers and children are entitled to special care and assistance.

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'To all the people's movements, we need your solidarity, we need your help, we need your sympathy.'

Dita Indah Sari – defender of workers' rights

Front: Dita Indah Sari © Widi/Jakarta Post

Left: Workers on strike in East Java, 1993

U Pa Pa Lay and U Lu Zaw

Jailed for joking

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoners of conscience U Pa Pa Lay and U Lu Zaw are in prison because they told political jokes. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for the immediate and unconditional release of both men and call for them to be provided with all the medical care they need while they remain in detention. Write to:

+ General Than Shwe, Chairman,

State Law and Order Restoration Council, c/o Ministry of Defence,

Signal Pagoda Road,

Yangon,

Union of Myanmar.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When is a joke not a joke? When it lands you in prison.

U Pa Pa Lay and U Lu Zaw are comedians. As part of the Myo Win Mar (Our Own Way) Anyeint troupe, a traditional Burmese entertainment group, they performed in front of 2,000 members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) on 4 January 1996, the 48th anniversary of Myanmar’s independence. The performance took place at the Yangon home of NLD leader Daw

Aung San Suu Kyi. She has been in prison or under house arrest most of the time since the NLD's electoral victory in 1990 was ignored by the military government.

The two comedians sang comic songs about the country's generals, satirized the military repression and told jokes about government cooperatives. One went: "In the past, thieves were called thieves. Now they are known as cooperative workers".

They had every right to make such jokes under Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These two articles guarantee freedom of thought and freedom of expression. Yet these rights were blatantly violated when both men were sentenced in March 1996 to seven years in prison.

They were arrested three days after the performance and charged under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act. This stipulates imprisonment for anyone who "causes or intends to spread false news, knowing beforehand that it is untrue". At their trial they were not allowed legal representation.

Both men are prisoners of conscience. They have been denied their rights under Article 3, the right to liberty; Article 9, freedom from arbitrary arrest; and Article 8, the right to remedy by a competent authority.

In April 1996 the men were transferred from prison to Kyein Kran Ka labour camp, where they were forced to work with iron bars on their legs. This violates Article 5, the right not to suffer torture and degrading treatment.

U Lu Zaw has since been moved to Katha labour camp, and U Pa Pa Lay to Myitkyina Prison where he is believed to be ill.

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ARTICLE 18

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion"

You have the right to hold views on any issue you like without fear of punishment or censure. You also have the right to believe in any religion – or none at all. You have the right to change your religion if you wish, and to practice and teach your religion or beliefs.

ARTICLE 19

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression"

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

'My moustache and I were in jail for one year and eight months. That was all because of making jokes.'

U Pa Pa Lay, referring to his imprisonment in the early 1990s

Front: U Pa Pa Lay and U Lu Zaw © Frans Hoeben/Hollandse Hoogte

Left: A performance of the troupe

Mansur Kikhiya

Human rights activist 'disappears'

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Mansur Kikhiya, a human rights activist, “disappeared” in 1993. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the Libyan Government for information on the fate and whereabouts of Mansur Kikhiya and ask the Egyptian Government to make public the results of its investigation. Write to:

+ His Excellency Mu’ ammar Gaddafi,

Leader of the Revolution,

Office of the Leader of the Revolution, Tripoli,

Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

+ His Excellency Muhammad Hosni Mubarak,

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt,

‘Abedin Palace, Cairo, Egypt.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mansur Kikhiya, a prominent Libyan human rights activist and opposition leader, went missing on human rights day – 10 December – in 1993. He was last seen in Cairo, Egypt. Amnesty International fears that he has been abducted by Libyan government agents and taken back to Libya. If so, his

rights under Article 3 of the UDHR, the right to life, liberty and security, and Article 9, which prohibits arbitrary detention, have been violated.

If Mansur Kikhiya is still alive, he is in his early sixties. He is a former Foreign Minister and was Libya's representative to the United Nations until 1980, when he resigned in protest at executions of political opponents by the Libyan authorities.

Following his resignation and until his "disappearance", he had been an active opponent of the government, living in exile in France.

He is a diabetic who needs regular injections of insulin.

At the time of his "disappearance", he was in Cairo attending a conference of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, of which he was a founding member. During the conference he was re-elected to its Executive Committee.

He was last seen on the evening of 10 December, and when he failed to turn up to meet his brother the alarm was raised, but to no avail.

Fears of his abduction by Libyan agents increased when, two days later, Libyan officials publicly described opposition members abroad as "stray dogs" and called for their "annihilation".

Prominent opponents of the Libyan Government living abroad have "disappeared" before – Jaballah Hamed Matar and 'Izzat Youssef al-Maqrif vanished in Cairo in March 1990. They are believed to be in a secret detention centre in Libya.

The Egyptian authorities stated that they had set up an investigation into Mansur Kikhiya's "disappearance". They subsequently told both Amnesty International and the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances that the investigation was complete, that Egypt was not involved in the incident, and that no light had been shed on Mansur Kikhiya's fate. However, the investigation failed to interview a crucial witness – a Libyan businessman who may have been the last person to see Mansur Kikhiya before his "disappearance" – even though he was in Egypt during the investigation and Mansur Kikhiya's lawyers called for him to be questioned. If the investigation was not impartial and thorough, it violated Article 8 of the UDHR, providing for a right of redress for human rights abuses.

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ARTICLE 3

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

ARTICLE 8

"Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law"

If your rights under the law are violated by someone else — be they another individual or a member of the police or security forces — you have the right to see justice done.

'Where is Mansur — and the thousands like him?... Help us. Return our loved ones to us.'

Mrs Baha' Kikhiya making an appeal on her husband's behalf in 1995

Front: Mansur Kikhiya © T. Chen/UN

Leticia Moctezuma Vargas

Death threats for opposing golf course

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Leticia Moctezuma Vargas is in fear for her life because of her environmental campaigning. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for a prompt and thorough investigation into the attacks and threats against her and others in her community and ask for those responsible to be brought to justice. Ask for immediate measures to be taken to protect her and her family. Write to:

+ The Minister of the Interior,
Francisco Labastida Ochoa,
Secretario de la Gobernación,
Secretaría de la Gobernación,
Bucareli 99, 1er piso, Col. Juárez,
06699 México DF, Mexico.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Leticia Moctezuma Vargas is a teacher and community activist. Together with many other members of the Tepoztlán community in the Mexican state of Morelos, she has been campaigning peacefully to stop a government-sponsored project which would seriously damage the community’s environment.

Her right to do so is set out in Article 20 of the UDHR, promising freedom of association. As a result of her participation, she and her young daughters were beaten and received death threats.

The project involves building a multi-million dollar golf course and tourist complex on common land regarded by the inhabitants of Tepoztlán as sacred. It is backed by a major development company, the state governor and the government. Lined up in opposition to it are the indigenous people of Tepoztlán, human rights activists and grassroots organizations working to protect the rights of the poor. Article 22 of the UDHR says that everyone is entitled to economic, cultural and social rights.

Local people have organized repeated peaceful protests. In April 1996 Leticia Moctezuma Vargas and her daughters joined a rally which was violently broken up by police. Leticia said that police seized old women by the hair and beat her and her children, including her 11-year-old daughter. This violates Article 5 of the UDHR, which forbids torture and ill-treatment.

Leticia saw three policemen drag Marcos Olmedo Gutiérrez, an elderly member of the community, wounded but alive, into a police vehicle. He was later found dead. He had been killed by a bullet in the back of the head, in breach of Article 3 of the UDHR – the right to life.

On 1 July 1996 Leticia Moctezuma Vargas received two threatening telephone calls. A man said: “Stop interfering in politics” and “You should take it easy with your politics or we will kill you”.

The following day there was another threatening call at the nursery where she works. The anonymous caller, this time female, said: “Take it easy or things will go bad for you, take it easy or we will kill you”.

Such threats are a violation of Article 3 of the UDHR, which says that we all have the right to live in safety, and Article 12, which protects the privacy of the family.

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We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

ARTICLE 12

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.”

No one has the right to intrude in your private life or to interfere with your home or family without good reason. No one has the right to attack your good name without reason. The law should protect you against such interference.

‘We are not tired of our struggle, but we are in despair’

Leticia Moctezuma Vargas

Left: The town hall in Tepoztlán, Morelos state, Mexico

Daw San San Nwe
Silenced by decree

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoner of conscience Daw San San Nwe is serving a prison sentence for exercising her rights to freedom of expression and assembly. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Please call for the immediate and unconditional release of San San Nwe and all other prisoners of conscience in Myanmar. Write to:

+ General Than Shwe, Chairman,
State Law and Order Restoration Council,
c/o Ministry of Defence,
Signal Pagoda Road, Yangon, Union of Myanmar.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Daw San San Nwe is well known in Myanmar as a journalist and writer. To the military authorities that control the country, that means she is a threat and they have gone to great lengths to silence her. Her writing has been banned in Myanmar since 1988, when a democracy movement emerged to challenge the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), Myanmar’s military government. This is in clear breach of Article 19 of the UDHR, which guarantees freedom of

expression. All publications are heavily censored in Myanmar and the government controls most of the press and publishing houses.

Not satisfied with banning her written words, the military authorities have also sentenced her to seven years in jail. Daw San San Nwe was arrested in August 1994 in Yangon, the capital. A widow in her fifties with four children, she was arrested with her daughter Ma Myat Mo Mo Tun and two other political leaders.

The four were detained for passing on information to foreign journalists and diplomats “against or critical of the government” and sending information to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Myanmar.

Their trial was held inside Insein prison in Yangon, in violation of Article 10 of the UDHR, which guarantees everyone accused of an offence a fair and open trial. Its outcome was a foregone conclusion, in breach of Article 11 of the UDHR which says that everyone must be presumed innocent until found guilty.

Daw San San Nwe was sentenced on 6 October 1994 to seven years’ imprisonment for spreading false information and to three years for membership or contact with illegal organizations. Amnesty International believes that she is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for exercising her rights to freedom of expression and assembly, guaranteed by Articles 19 and 20 of the UDHR.

This is not San San Nwe’s first experience of imprisonment. She is a member of the National League for Democracy, Myanmar’s foremost opposition party, and was arrested in July 1989 during a nationwide crack-down by the military on the opposition.

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ARTICLE 11

“Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty”

If you are accused of a crime, you have the right to be treated as innocent, unless or until you are proved guilty, according to the law, in a fair and public trial, where you are allowed to mount a proper defence. You cannot be tried for doing something which was not a criminal offence in law at the time it was done.

ARTICLE 19

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

‘I believe that it is not the duty of a writer to take part personally in political battles; ... a writer discharges his or her duty simply by observing and putting on record the rights and wrongs, the justices and injustices that result from these battles.’

Daw San San Nwe

Left: A meeting of the National League for Democracy, the main opposition party, which won elections held in 1990 but was prevented from taking office

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti
Jailed human rights campaigner

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti and Shehi Sani have been sentenced to 15 years in prison after alerting the world to the practice of unfair trials in Nigeria. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for their immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ General Sani Abacha, Chairman,
Provisional Ruling Council,
State House, Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory,
Nigeria.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti has been a staunch defender of human rights and democratic freedoms in Nigeria for many years. He is Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy, a coalition of pro-democracy and human rights groups, working to promote human rights guaranteed by the UDHR, including Article 21 – the right to participate in government.

He helped found the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, is a former President of the Nigerian Medical Association and a leading member of the international Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

He and Shehu Sani, Vice-Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy, were sentenced to 15-year prison terms for their human rights work on behalf of prisoners convicted in secret treason trials in 1995.

The prisoners were among 43 people convicted of treason and related offences after secret and grossly unfair trials, in violation of Articles 10 and 11 of the UDHR. They were tried by a Special Military Tribunal appointed by the military government and headed by a member of the government. They could not choose lawyers or defend themselves. They had no right of appeal to a higher court. They were alleged to have been involved in plotting to overthrow the government in March 1995, a plot whose existence is widely doubted.

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti and Shehu Sani were convicted of being accessories to treason and sentenced to life imprisonment, later reduced to 15 years, for informing others about the unfair trials being conducted by the Tribunal. Their right to do this is protected by Article 19 of the UDHR guaranteeing freedom of expression.

Dr Ransome-Kuti was arrested in July 1995. He has been held in solitary confinement since his conviction in Katsina, more than 1,200 kilometres from his home in Lagos. Shehu Sani is in Aba prison, nearly 1,000 kilometres from his family in Kaduna. They are allowed only brief supervised monthly visits from two relatives and no written communication with anyone. Dr Ransome-Kuti's health is reported to be very poor; he is constantly feverish with malaria, physically weak and emaciated, and requires medical tests which cannot be undertaken with the inadequate medical facilities available at the prison.

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ARTICLE 10

“Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

ARTICLE 19

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

‘The public is not deceived. The fact remains that they are being punished for their commitment to democracy, rule of law and freedom.’

Dr Ransome-Kuti's daughter, Nike Ransome-Kuti

Above: Nigerian military operations in Ogoniland, January 1996 © Glenn Ellis

Front: Dr Ransome-Kuti © Tola-Ogunleye Enterprises

Zafaryab Ahmed

Detained for opposing child labour

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Zafaryab Ahmed has been charged with sedition for writing about the death of Iqbal Masih, a children’s rights activist. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for the charges against Zafaryab Ahmed to be dropped immediately, and call for an impartial investigation into the death of Iqbal Masih. Write to:

+ Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif,

Office of the Prime Minister,

Islamabad,

Pakistan.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Zafaryab Ahmed is a journalist and human rights activist who has long opposed bonded labour (a system by which people are sold into virtual slavery to pay off debts), especially when the victims are children.

In theory, bonded labour has been abolished in Pakistan. A law abolishing it was passed in 1992, and bonded labour is also prohibited under the Constitution.

Nevertheless, the system of bonded labour persists, and millions of bonded labourers work in agriculture, in the carpet and brick kiln industries and as domestic labour. Many are children. Sometimes bonded labourers are bought and sold by their “owners”. The practice of bonded labour violates Article 4 of the UDHR prohibiting slavery or servitude.

Zafaryab Ahmed was arrested in June 1995 after writing about the death of Iqbal Masih, a children’s rights activist.

Iqbal Masih was just four years old when he was sold into bondage to a carpet factory owner in Punjab because his father needed a loan to pay for his eldest son’s wedding. To repay the loan, Iqbal worked more than 12 hours each day in the carpet factory, but the exorbitant interest rates meant that the debt grew ever larger.

At the age of 10, Iqbal Masih attended a human rights meeting, and his life changed radically. He gave an impromptu speech which was printed in the local papers. He refused to return to his owner and managed to obtain his freedom. He spoke in front of large audiences to testify about the realities of life for child bonded labourers and helped many other children to free themselves from bondage. Iqbal Masih was shot dead in his home town of Muridke, Punjab, in April 1995 when he was just 12 years old. His killers have never been brought to justice.

After writing about the case, Zafaryab Ahmed was arrested and charged with sedition. He was accused of “exploiting the death of Iqbal Masih” in his writings in order to cause “a recurring financial loss to the Pakistani business interests abroad... to pave the way for economic warfare against Pakistan”. His detention violated Article 19 of the UDHR guaranteeing freedom of expression. Zafaryab Ahmed was released on bail on health grounds in July 1995 but still faces sedition charges.

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ARTICLE 4

“No one shall be held in slavery or servitude”

Human beings must not be owned, bought or sold. No one has the right to enslave anyone else. Slavery is a crime.

ARTICLE 19

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You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

‘I was shocked. So shall all those be who are striving to establish the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights.’

Zafaryab Ahmed, writing after a government minister acknowledged that torture was a fact of life in Pakistan

Iqbal Masih, murdered for speaking out, 1995

Nadezhda Chaykova

Journalist killed for investigating corruption

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Nadezhda Chaykova was killed while investigating corruption. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for her death to be impartially investigated, and for those responsible to be brought to justice. Call for assurances that journalists will be allowed to carry out their work without fear of harassment, torture or repression. Write to:

+ Procurator General of the Russian Federation,

Yury Skuratov, 103793 g. Moskva K-31, Ul. B. Dimitrovka, 15, Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Generalnomu prokuroru, Skuratovu Yu,

Russian Federation

+ President of the Chechen Republic-Ichkeriya,

Aslan Maskhadov, Chechenskaya Respublika Ichkeriya, Grozny, Administratsiya Presidenta, Presidentu Maskhadovu, Russian Federation.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Nadezhda Chaykova was a journalist covering the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic. Her determined efforts to uncover corruption at the highest levels cost her her life. She was 32 years old when she was killed.

Her body was found in March 1996 in a shallow grave near the Chechen village of Gekhi, about 20 kilometres from Grozny, capital of the breakaway Chechen Republic. According to the post-mortem, she had been blindfolded, severely beaten, forced into a kneeling position and killed by a bullet in the back of the head. Her most basic rights had been violated – rights promised to everyone by the UDHR. Article 3 guarantees the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and Article 5 forbids torture and ill-treatment.

Nadezhda Chaykova was a correspondent for the respected Russian weekly newspaper *Obshchaya Gazeta*. She was investigating the alleged embezzlement of money earmarked for the reconstruction of the Chechen Republic's war-ravaged economy. In 1995 she had published articles in the newspaper *Ekspress-Khronika* which claimed that funds were being misappropriated by the leaders of all sides – commanders of the Russian federal forces, senior figures in the Chechen Government and commanders loyal to rebel leader Dzhokar Dudayev.

She was warned anonymously that she should stop her investigation if she wanted to stay alive, but she carried on with her work. Fellow journalists talked to her on 20 March 1996, when she was heading for the town of Samashki. She planned to disguise herself as a Chechen peasant woman in order to report on the operations of the Russian federal army in the area. That was the last time they saw her alive.

There is conflicting information about who killed Nadezhda Chaykova. A note she wrote herself, and a local official, point towards Russian federal troops as her killers. Other sources accuse Chechen leaders of ordering her execution. What is not in doubt is that she was killed in order to silence her – in violation of Article 19 of the UDHR guaranteeing freedom of expression.

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ARTICLE 19

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You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

‘She was killed by experienced executioners; she was killed with a show-off cruelty’

A colleague of Nadezhda Chaykova, writing in ‘*Obshchaya Gazeta*’

Left: The body of Nadezhda Chaykova

© Michael Klimentyev/ *Obschaya Gazeta*

Front: Nadezhda Chaykova with her son

Aktham Nu'aysa

Tortured for issuing a leaflet

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

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**Amnesty International, International Secretariat,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoner of conscience Aktham Nu'aysa was tortured and sentenced to nine years in prison because he called for human rights reform. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for his immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ His Excellency Hafez al-Assad,

Presidential Palace,

Abu Rummaneh,

Al-Rashid Street,

Damascus,

Syria.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Aktham Nu'aysa is a Syrian lawyer who has been tortured and sentenced to nine years in jail because he dared to call for human rights reform.

In late 1991 the human rights situation in Syria appeared to be improving. The sudden release of more than 2,000 untried political prisoners suggested the possible beginning of a period of greater freedom of expression.

Against this backdrop, a small group of people decided that the time had come to talk openly about politics and human rights.

Aktham Nu'aysa and 16 others wrote and produced a leaflet about human rights violations in Syria, in association with the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria (CDF). The CDF called for reforms including abolition of the state of emergency in force since 1963 and the release of political prisoners, in line with Article 3 of the UDHR which protects the rights to life, liberty and security of the person, and Article 9 which prohibits arbitrary detention.

The leaflet was issued on 10 December 1991 but its authors' hopes proved tragically misplaced. All 17 were arrested by the security forces and held in incommunicado detention. They were charged with "publishing false information", "receiving money from abroad" for the CDF, and "withholding information" about their activities. They were tried before the Supreme State Security Court in early 1992. Aktham Nu'aysa was apparently unable to walk into the courtroom because he had been so badly tortured – a violation of Article 5 of the UDHR. The trial was manifestly unfair, a breach of Article 10 of the UDHR. Defence lawyers were not allowed access to the defendants before trial and were denied the time to prepare their case and produce witnesses. The prosecution evidence was based largely on the evidence of "confessions" extracted under torture. Fourteen defendants were sentenced to prison terms of between three and 10 years. Aktham Nu'aysa received a nine-year sentence.

Aktham Nu'aysa, who is in his late forties, suffers from a kidney complaint. He has been held incommunicado in Sainaya prison and it is feared that his health is deteriorating. Amnesty International believes that he and his colleagues are prisoners of conscience.

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ARTICLE 5

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"

Torture is forbidden at all times and in all circumstances. No one should suffer treatment or punishment that is cruel or makes them feel less than human. These rules apply everywhere — in police stations, prisons, on the streets, in peacetime or during a war.

ARTICLE 10

"Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal"

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

'Unless Mr Nu'aysa receives appropriate medical attention soon, outside the prison, he may go blind.'

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

The leaflet calling for the release of political prisoners, written in 1991 by Aktham Nu'aysa and the CDF, that led to his imprisonment and torture

Ngawang Sangdrol

Imprisoned for expressing her beliefs

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Prisoner of conscience Ngawang Sangdrol has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for openly supporting Tibetan independence. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for her immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ President of the Tibet Autonomous Region,

Gyaltzen Norbu Zhuxi,

Xizang Renmin Zhengfu,

1 Kang’andonglu, Lasashi 850000

Xizang Zizhiqu, People’s Republic of China.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ngawang Sangdrol is a Buddhist nun who believes that Tibet should be independent from China. She has been sentenced to 18 years’ imprisonment by the Chinese authorities for shouting slogans such as “Free Tibet”, singing pro-independence songs and participating in peaceful demonstrations. Her imprisonment violates Articles 18 and 19 of the UDHR which guarantee freedom of conscience and of expression.

Ngawang Sangdrol was first arrested in 1990 in Lhasa after taking part in a pro-independence demonstration lasting less than five minutes. She was held for four months.

In 1992 she was arrested again after staging a demonstration in central Lhasa calling for Tibetan independence. She was sentenced to three years in jail. This was increased to nine years in 1993 when she was convicted with 13 other imprisoned nuns of composing and recording pro-independence songs inside Drapchi Prison. The songs were recorded on a tape-recorder smuggled into the prison. The tape was then circulated secretly in Tibet. On the tape each nun dedicates a song or poem to their supporters. “All of you outside who have done all that you can for us in prison, we are deeply grateful to you and we will never forget you,” sings one. “We are beaten and treated brutally,” sings another, “but this will never change the Tibetan people’s perseverance.”

Tibetan political prisoners are often tortured or ill-treated, in violation of Article 5 of the UDHR, which prohibits torture and ill-treatment.

Despite her suffering, Ngawang Sangdrol continued to proclaim her beliefs. In 1996, while undergoing punishment for a breach of prison rules, she shouted “Free Tibet”. As a result, Ngawang Sandrol and four other nuns who were also being punished were reportedly beaten by prison guards.

Ngawang Sandrol was subsequently singled out for severe punishment. She was held in a solitary confinement cell with reduced food rations for several months. In July 1996 her prison sentence was doubled to 18 years, the longest sentence passed on a woman political prisoner in Tibet.

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ARTICLE 18

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”
You have the right to hold views on any issue you like without fear of punishment or censure. You also have the right to believe in any religion – or none at all. You have the right to change your religion if you wish, and to practice and teach your religion or beliefs.

‘No matter how hard we are beaten,
Our linked arms cannot be separated...
The time will come when the sun
Will shine through the clouds.’
Lines from a song recorded by imprisoned nuns

Front: Ngawang Sangdrol © T.I.N.

Left: Buddhist nuns in Lhasa © T.I.N.

Fred M'membe

Jailed for upholding press freedom

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Fred M'membe was jailed for upholding press freedom. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for the charges against him to be immediately and unconditionally dropped and call for an end to the harassment of Fred M'membe and his fellow journalists. Write to:

+ His Excellency Frederick Chiluba,
President of the Republic of Zambia,
State House,
Independence Avenue,
PO Box 30208,
Lusaka, Zambia
(e-mail: state@zamnet.zm)

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Fred M'membe is a Zambian journalist dedicated to upholding press freedom and reporting the facts. His determination to uncover the truth has led to a long campaign by the Zambian authorities to silence him and the newspaper he edits, The Post.

In March 1996 Fred M'membe and fellow journalist Bright Mwape were imprisoned after a committee of the Zambian National Assembly announced that it had found the two men guilty of libel and contempt of parliament. The accusations stemmed from articles in *The Post* which criticized a speech by the Vice-President denouncing a Supreme Court ruling which upheld freedom of assembly – a right guaranteed by Article 20 of the UDHR.

The arrest of Fred M'membe and Bright Mwape violated Article 9 of the UDHR, which prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. It also broke Zambia's own laws. When the two journalists were pronounced guilty and sentenced to indefinite detention by a National Assembly committee, this violated Article 10 of the UDHR and Zambia's Constitution. They had been deprived of their right to a fair trial before a properly constituted court of law.

Fred M'membe and Bright Mwape were held for 24 days in grim conditions, until their release by a High Court judge. Fred later said: "Cells designed to accommodate 10 inmates hold around 90. It was terrible and the sanitation is very poor. Terminally ill patients died almost every day at the prison." Since 1991, when it was launched, *The Post* has been bombarded with more than a hundred writs accusing it of criminal activity, including criminal defamation, publishing classified information and sedition. Supporters of the ruling party have demonstrated against the newspaper and attacked its offices. In February 1996 an issue was banned and three journalists including Fred M'membe were arrested and charged under the State Security Act. Such attempts to silence the newspaper violate Article 19 of the UDHR guaranteeing freedom of expression. Fred M'membe himself still faces up to 40 criminal charges accusing him of defamation and libel.

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'Our political role is to question the policies and actions of the authorities and all those who wield social, economic and political power over the lives of ordinary people.'

Fred M'membe

Fred M'membe's contribution to press freedom was recognized when he was given the prestigious Astor Award by the Commonwealth Press Union in 1996.

Left and front photo © MISA

Dushi and Ahmed
Children detained for seeking protection
Defend the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Thousands of people seeking asylum from human rights violations have been detained by the Australian authorities. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the Australian Government to make decisions on the detention of asylum-seekers on the basis of the individual circumstances of the person, in accordance with international refugee protection standards, and to allow periodic review of their detention. Write to:

+ The Hon Daryl Williams
Attorney General and Minister for Justice
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia
Fax: +61 6 277 2058

þ Send copies of your letters to the Australian diplomatic mission in your country.

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Children detained for seeking protection

‘[I] think about my life in the future and my life in detention for more than three years... I just see the fence behind me, the double fence and nothing around me. I cannot see anything. Only fence.’
An asylum-seeker describes her life in detention

Dushi*, a 13-year-old Tamil, fled his home in the Jaffna Province of Sri Lanka to try and escape artillery and bomb attacks on his village. His brother had been killed during an artillery attack. For about 18 months he and his family lived in refugee camps. Dushi was under threat from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, an armed opposition group, who wanted him to join them as a fighter. His family sent him to live with relatives in Colombo, the capital, where they hoped he would be safer. However, shortly after he arrived there, he was detained and beaten by the local police. His family, increasingly worried about his safety, arranged for him to leave Sri Lanka.

Dushi arrived in Sydney, Australia, in early 1997, alone and with no valid travel papers. He was immediately detained under Australian immigration law and held in the maximum security section of an immigration detention centre, in prison-like conditions. He was not granted refugee status until nearly three months after his arrival in Australia.

Ahmed*, a 15-year-old, fled his home in North Africa after seeing the last surviving member of his family killed in political unrest. With no one to turn to for protection, he made his way to the coast, stowed away on a boat and eventually found assistance among North African communities in southern France.

He was repeatedly harassed and beaten by French police. In early 1996, fearing imprisonment and deportation because he had no documents to prove his identity, he stowed away on a ship bound for Australia.

When the ship arrived in Sydney he was immediately detained by immigration officials. He remained behind barbed wire for four months while his asylum application was assessed. Finally he was granted a visa and released.

Article 9 of the UDHR prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. However, under Australian law, people arriving without proper travel documents face automatic detention, even if they are asylum-seekers. Unlike people suspected of having committed an offence, they generally have no right to have their detention reviewed. The UN Human Rights Committee has stated that the Australian practice of detention is arbitrary and violates human rights. In addition, this practice violates international standards for the protection of refugees.

*names changed

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Article 9

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”

You may not be arrested or held in a police station or prison without good reason. You may not be kept out of your own country. If you are detained, you have the right to challenge the detention in a court of law.

Article 14

“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”
If you are forced to flee your home because of human rights abuses, you have the right to seek safety in another country. This means that border police or other authorities may not refuse you entry, or return you to your own country, without proper consideration being given to your request for asylum.

Left and front: Asylum-seekers in detention in Australia. Since 1989 about 2,850 asylum-seekers, including some 760 children, have arrived in Australia by boat without valid travel documents. They can spend up to four years in detention.

Both photos: © West Australian Newspapers Ltd

Pedro Montenegro and Marcelo Nascimento
Death threats for denouncing killings of homosexuals
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WHAT YOU CAN DO

The lives of Pedro Montenegro and Marcelo Nascimento are at risk because of their demand for an inquiry into the extrajudicial executions of homosexuals. They have been threatened for attempting to uphold rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for an investigation into the death threats made against them and ask for those found responsible to be brought to justice. Write to:

+ Exmo. Divaldo Suruagy
Governador do Estado de Alagoas
Palacio Marechal Floriano Peixoto 517
Maceio, Alagoas, CEP 57020-901, Brazil

Ask for full investigations into human rights violations against transvestites and homosexuals in Brazil. Write to:

+ Exmo. Sr. Ministro da Justiça,
Dr. Iris Rezende, Ministério da Justiça
Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco 23
Brasília, DF, CEP 70064-900, Brazil

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Pedro Montenegro, Marcelo Nascimento

‘I want firm measures to be taken, because the violence against gays has to stop.’
Marcelo Nascimento commenting on the torture and ill-treatment of transvestites and homosexuals,
June 1997.

Marcelo Nascimento, President of the Brazilian gay rights group Grupo Gay de Alagoas, and Pedro Montenegro, a member of the Forum Contra a Violencia em Alagoas and of the Amnesty International Section in Brazil, have been the target of anonymous death threats because they demanded an inquiry into the killing of three people.

On 6 June 1997, three men – a transvestite and two homosexuals working as prostitutes in Maceio, state capital of Alagoas -- were shot dead. Two civil police officers and one civilian have since been accused of the crime. It is alleged that the civil police had been running a protection racket among the prostitutes and that the three were murdered because they had not paid their “fee” of US\$10 a night. A police investigation has been opened.

Marcelo Nascimento and Pedro Montenegro publicly called for an inquiry into the killings. Twelve days after the killings they received anonymous telephone calls warning them to drop their investigations or they would themselves be killed. The pattern of death threats against human rights defenders who call for inquiries into extrajudicial executions is a clear violation of basic human rights protected by the UDHR.

There is widespread ill-treatment and killing by Brazilian police of people from social minorities, including homosexuals and transvestites, in violation of Article 7, which guarantees the right of everyone to equal protection before the law. On 10 June 1997, three other transvestites were arrested in the streets of Maceio, allegedly for failing to pay their “fee”. They were taken to the 2nd Precinct of the Civil Police, where they were beaten all over their bodies with rubber sandals studded with nails. The head of the civil police in Maceio has said that he will open an official inquiry only if an official complaint is made, but the three are too fearful to do so. Two of the three are currently living in a “safe house” provided by the Grupo Gay de Alagoas.

The torture and murder of members of minority groups in Brazil violate Article 3 of the UDHR, the right to life and the security of the person, and Article 5, which states that torture is forbidden at all times.

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ARTICLE 3

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

ARTICLE 7

“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”

You have the right to be treated by law in the same way as everyone else. You have the same right to be protected by the laws of your country as everyone else.

Front: Marcelo Nascimento

Left: Pedro Montenegro

Li Hai

Jailed for monitoring human rights violations

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Li Hai has been imprisoned for daring to monitor human rights violations in China. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for his immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ The Minister of Justice of the
People’s Republic of China
Xiao Yang Buzhang - Sifabu
Xiaguangli
Beijingshi 100016
People’s Republic of China

+ The Mayor of Beijing
Jia Qinglin Shizhang
Beijingshi Renmi Zhengfu
2 Zhengyilu
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100744
People’s Republic of China

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Li Hai

‘...draw the lesson written in blood, advance the course of democracy and legality.’
Extract from an open letter signed by Li Hai

Li Hai, a human rights activist and former student in Beijing at the time of the 1989 pro-democracy movement, is serving a nine-year prison sentence for trying to monitor human rights violations in China.

Following the government crack-down on the pro-democracy protests in June 1989, in which thousands of protesters were killed, Li Hai was detained for over a year. After his release he was unable to continue his studies or find work. He started investigating the situation of those who remained in jail in connection with the 1989 crack-down. His activities included sponsoring petitions calling on the authorities to institute reforms, for which he was detained on several occasions. In May 1995 he was arrested and charged with “hooliganism” — a charge which was later dropped and replaced by that of “leaking state secrets”. During his trial, the charge was changed again to “prying into state secrets”.

In December 1996 Li Hai was convicted on this latter charge. This verdict treated independent human rights monitoring as a crime. It was based solely on the accusation that Li Hai had gathered information about political prisoners jailed since 1989, including their names, sentences and places of detention. Li Hai is arbitrarily imprisoned for peacefully exercising his right to seek, receive and impart information, as set out in Article 19 of the UDHR. Li Hai was tried in secret on the grounds that the case involved “state secrets”. This is a violation of Article 10 of the UDHR which guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing. Irregularities at his trial included the unexplained process by which he was convicted of “prying into state secrets” after the court rejected the prosecution charge of “leaking state secrets”. Li Hai should have been released when this charge was dismissed, but his trial appears to have been a mere formality. In China, the verdict in political cases is usually decided before the trial. This practice violates the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty, as guaranteed under Article 11 of the UDHR.

Li Hai’s family, who had been denied permission to see him, were excluded from the trial and from the hearing at which the verdict was announced. His appeal was rejected in March 1997.

The charge of “prying into” or “leaking state secrets” can be applied in China to anyone who gathers, reveals or circulates information which is judged to be “politically sensitive”. The legislation on state secrets has been increasingly used to arbitrarily repress freedom of expression and association. Since 1991 a growing number of people have been arrested and sentenced on such charges solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression, guaranteed under Article 19 of the UDHR. At least 16 are known to have been convicted on this charge after secret, unfair trials.

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ARTICLE 10

“Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

ARTICLE 19

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

Front: Li Hai © HRIC

Dr Jean-Paul Simbizi

Forced to flee because of his human rights work

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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Amnesty International, International Secretariat,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Dr Jean-Paul Simbizi’s life has been threatened because of his human rights work. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the authorities to protect Dr Jean-Paul Simbizi if he returns and to ensure human rights defenders in the country are able to carry out their work in safety. Write to:

+ President Laurent-Désiré Kabila
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
Democratic Republic of Congo

+ Mwenze Kongolo, Minister of the Interior
Hôtel du Conseil exécutif, Kinshasa-Gombe
Democratic Republic of Congo

+ Yagi Sitolo, Governor of Haut-Congo
Gouvernorat, Kisangani
Democratic Republic of Congo

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Dr Jean-Paul Simbizi

‘My life has been threatened and all my belongings have been burned...

Later, I learned that the authorities had sanctioned the students’ attack on me because of my intensive human rights work.’ [For translators: Personnellement je suis menacé de mort et tous mes biens ont été brûlés... Plus tard, j’ai pu apprendre que les autorités ont enteriné mon attaque par les étudiants, vu mes intenses activités dans les droits de l’homme.]

Dr Jean-Paul Simbizi

Dr Jean-Paul Simbizi is a medical doctor who worked in Kisangani in the Haut-Congo region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire).

In March 1992 a peaceful demonstration organized by a group of Christians – some of whom later founded the human rights group Justice and Liberation – was violently broken up by the police. This was a denial of the right under Article 20 of the UDHR to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. Dr Simbizi was involved in helping the injured and in negotiating the release of detained demonstrators. He later joined Justice and Liberation, becoming one of its leading members.

In November 1996 armed conflict between the Zairian army and Tutsi-dominated forces of the Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre (AFDL), led to violent attacks on both Hutu and Tutsi civilians throughout Zaire. Dr Simbizi was briefly detained by members of the security forces, who accused him of supporting the AFDL and possessing weapons. The authorities apparently sanctioned the burning of his belongings by a group of students.

After Dr Simbizi’s release, a series of death threats forced him into hiding. He fled the country and was granted asylum in Canada. The right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution, guaranteed by Article 14 of the UDHR, has been denied to many victims of human rights violations seeking refuge.

Dr Simbizi wants to return to Kisangani to rejoin his family and continue his medical practice.

However, despite a change of government in May 1997, when the AFDL took power, human rights activists and groups continue to face persecution. Dr Simbizi fears that his life would still be in danger. His right to life, liberty and security, guaranteed by Article 3 of the UDHR, has been denied him in his own country.

Many human rights activists have been detained and others are subjected to daily threats from the military and civilian authorities because of their efforts to publicize human rights abuses. Thousands of Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi, and other unarmed civilians – including human rights activists and other Congolese citizens – are reported to have been killed by armed combatants since September 1996. Killings were still being reported in June 1997.

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Article 3

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

Article 14

“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”
If you are forced to flee your home because of human rights abuses, you have the right to seek safety in another country. This means that border police or other authorities may not refuse you entry, or return you to your own country, without proper consideration being given to your request for asylum.

Left: At least 37 peaceful marchers were extrajudicially executed by government forces in Kinshasa, a month before Dr Simbizi participated in the Kisangani demonstration

Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina
Jailed for seeking reforms
Defend the Defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina has been sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment because he called for reform in Cuba. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for his immediate and unconditional release. Write to:

+ The Attorney-General
Dr Juan Escalona Reguera
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3,
Havana, Cuba

+ The Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sr Roberto Robaina González
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360, Vedado,
Havana, Cuba

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina

‘This is proof that in Cuba there is no freedom or democracy’ [For translators: "Esto es una prueba de que en Cuba no existe libertad ni democracia"]

These words, reportedly spoken in court by a member of the MCJD, resulted in his being charged with “disrespect to a judge”.

Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina is the President of the Cuban Youth Movement for Democracy (MCJD), an unofficial group which has been involved in a number of projects, including campaigns for university reform.

In April 1997 Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina was sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment for “disrespect” and “resisting authority”. Two months later Radamés García de la Vega, Vice-president of the MCJD, was also sentenced to 18 months in prison, for “disrespect to the president”. Both men have been jailed for peacefully exercising the rights to freedom of expression and association guaranteed by Articles 19 and 20 of the UDHR.

In March 1997 during a telephone conversation, Néstor Rodríguez reportedly described the government-backed Fourteenth Youth and Student Festival in Havana, as “the festival of a youth without hope, estranged, alienated and without future”. He was arrested a few days later and was tried two days after his arrest.

Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina and Radamés García de la Vega had been convicted on similar charges in June 1996, reportedly in connection with their attempts to organize a movement for university reform in Havana.

They were sentenced to 12 and six months’ “restricted liberty” and five years’ internal exile after a summary trial in which they did not have access to defence counsel, in violation of Article 10 of the UDHR which guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal. They were still serving these sentences at the time of their latest arrest.

Freedoms of expression, association and assembly are severely restricted in Cuba. All non-governmental organizations have to register with the Ministry of Justice and fulfil certain criteria, including a commitment to the current system of government. Many unofficial groups which have tried to register have simply never received a reply.

Dozens of members of unofficial groups of various kinds have been subjected to constant harassment, short-term detention, threats of imprisonment, actual imprisonment or forcible exile abroad since the Cuban Council, a forum of some 140 unofficial groups of which the MCJD is a member, was set up in October 1995.

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ARTICLE 20

“Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association”

You have the right to gather together with other people, in public or private.

You have the right to hold meetings and organize peaceful demonstrations. Everyone has the right to form or join societies, trade unions, political groups and other associations. No one may force you to join any group if you do not wish to.

Front: Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina

Left: Néstor Rodríguez Lobaina with Radamés García de la Vega

Bertha Oliva de Nativí
Threatened with death for investigating state killings
Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Human rights defenders in Honduras have been threatened and physically attacked for trying to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the authorities to protect all those involved in uncovering violations by the state security forces, and to investigate vigorously both past violations and recent threats made against people like Bertha Oliva de Nativí. Write to:

+ The President*

Presidente de la República de Honduras
Casa Presidencial, 6a Avenida, 1a Calle
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

*(elections will be held in November 1997)

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Bertha Oliva de Nativí

‘Those who attempt to keep the country surrounded by the walls of impunity have initiated yet another of the many campaigns of intimidation and death threats against members of COFADEH.’

[For translators: Nuevamente quienes pretenden mantener al país cercado con los muros de la impunidad iniciaron otra más de las tantas campañas de intimidación y amenazas a muerte contra miembros del COFADEH.]

Bertha Oliva de Nativí

Bertha Oliva de Nativí is the general coordinator of the Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), an organization which has been campaigning for human rights in Honduras since the early 1980s.

On 2 April 1997 Bertha Oliva de Nativí received a call on her private telephone in which a man imitated the sounds of a person being killed and said, “This is how you'll end up, bitch”.

This was only one in a series of calls to members of COFADEH in which they and their families had been threatened. About two weeks earlier an anonymous caller had informed Bertha Oliva de Nativí that a member of the Honduran military accused of involvement in past human rights violations had paid him to kill Liduvina Hernández, COFADEH's President. He described Liduvina Hernández and gave both her address and a detailed account of her latest movements.

In their attempts to investigate and clarify the fate of scores of people who have “disappeared” in Honduras since 1980, COFADEH – along with similar organizations, members of the judiciary and government agencies involved in clarifying cases of human rights violations – have faced strong opposition from those responsible for past human rights violations.

Judicial proceedings in the cases of army and police officers accused in connection with “disappearances” have been slow to start or inconclusive. In July 1995 the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights charged ten military officers with violations committed in the 1980s. When arrest warrants were issued against three of the ten, they went into hiding, allegedly helped by fellow military personnel.

Attempts have been made to claim amnesty for past human rights violations. Witnesses have been killed. Trials have been disrupted by violence.

In violation of Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the UDHR, human rights violations remain uninvestigated, their perpetrators unpunished and the victims and relatives without redress. The resulting climate of impunity leaves people like Bertha Oliva de Nativí in constant danger.

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Article 6

“Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law”

Every human being has the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law. We must all be granted the rights and bear the obligations accorded to every person by the law.

Article 8

“Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law”

If your rights under the law are violated by someone else – be they another individual or a member of the police or security forces – you have the right to see justice done.

Left: Liduvina Hernández (front left), Bertha Oliva de Nativí (centre) and other COFADEH members on their way to the monthly gathering in remembrance of the “disappeared” outside the cathedral in Tegucigalpa © COFADEH

Jaswant Singh Khalra
'Disappeared' for exposing the truth
Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Jaswant Singh Khalra “disappeared” after being abducted by the Punjab police. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the authorities to establish the fate of Jaswant Singh Khalra; to ensure prompt and independent investigations into the fate of hundreds of other “disappeared” in Punjab; and to bring those found responsible to justice. Write to:

+ Indrajit Gupta,
Minister for Home Affairs
Ministry for Home Affairs
North Block, New Delhi 110 001, India
Fax: 91 11 301 5750 Attention Home Minister
Salutation: Dear Home Minister

+ Harcharan Singh Brar,
Chief Minister of Punjab
Office of the Chief Minister
Chandigarh, Punjab, India
Telegram: Chief Minister, Chandigarh, Punjab, India
Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Jaswant Singh Khalra

‘Jaswant fell prey because he exposed the truth and stood by it.’
Paramjit Kaur, wife of Jaswant Singh Khalra

Jaswant Singh Khalra, General Secretary of the Human Rights Wing of the Akali Dal political party, was arrested by police on 6 September 1995 outside his home in Kabir Park, Amritsar, in Punjab, India. He has not been seen since.

Despite safeguards in Indian law against unacknowledged detention, police officials repeatedly denied that he had been taken into custody, and he was never brought before a magistrate. This violates Article 6 of the UDHR which guarantees the right to recognition before the law and to be granted the rights accorded in law.

Jaswant Singh Khalra was involved in a campaign to highlight the plight of hundreds of people who “disappeared” after being arrested by the Punjab police. The Human Rights Wing produced records from cremation grounds in Amritsar which showed that several hundred “unclaimed” bodies had been cremated during 1992. They alleged that many of those cremated had “disappeared” after being arrested by the Punjab police.

The Human Rights Wing filed a petition in January 1995 with the Punjab and Haryana High Court concerning the deaths of these hundreds of “unidentified” people. The Court dismissed the petition on the grounds that it should have been filed by the families of the “disappeared”.

Shortly after the petition was filed, Jaswant Singh Khalra was reportedly threatened by a member of the Punjab police who told him that it “was easy to make one more ‘disappear’.”

The Supreme Court of India ordered an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the “disappearance” of Jaswant Singh Khalra. In July 1996, nine Punjab police officials were found responsible for his abduction; none has so far been prosecuted. The fate of Jaswant Singh Khalra remains unknown.

There are regular reports of alleged members of armed groups or their relatives “disappearing” or being killed in police custody in violation of the right to life and liberty guaranteed by Article 3 of the UDHR. In official accounts, their deaths or “disappearance” are often wrongly attributed to “encounters” between the police and armed political groups, to escapes during “encounters”, or to other improbable causes. There have also been several reports of lawyers being arrested and illegally held in unacknowledged detention.

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Left: A postcard produced by the Khalra International Action Committee. The card is addressed to the Indian Prime Minister and appeals for assurance of his whereabouts and that he be given immediate access to a lawyer and to his relatives.

Irene Fernandez

On trial for supporting the rights of migrant workers

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Irene Fernandez is on trial for supporting the rights of migrant workers. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for all charges against Irene Fernandez to be withdrawn and for her trial to be halted. Ask for a full investigation into the allegations of ill-treatment in detention camps for migrant workers, and for the findings to be made public. Write to:

+ Deputy Prime Minister
Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim
Jalan Dato’ Onn
50502 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

þ Form an action group and lobby your own government. Urge it to raise the case with the Malaysian authorities.

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Irene Fernandez

'We can only claim our rights and assert them through a collective struggle.
And it is with this thought that we request all of you to continue the protests nationally and globally...
We believe that truth will prevail and will set us free!'

Irene Fernandez

Irene Fernandez is the Director of Tenaganita, a women's non-governmental organization based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which deals with health issues.

She has been charged with "maliciously publishing false news" and faces a possible sentence of up to three years in prison if she is found guilty.

Her trial, which began in June 1996, is likely to continue until 1998. She is currently free on bail pending the outcome of her trial.

She was charged after Tenaganita published a report in August 1995 about abuses in camps for migrant workers. The report was based on interviews with over 300 migrant workers who had been detained as illegal immigrants. The report detailed treatment which violated Article 5 of the UDHR which prohibits torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Many former detainees were reported to be suffering from dehydration and malnutrition. Some of the women said that they had been sexually abused in the camps. Others claimed they had been beaten and forced to stand in the hot sun for hours if they asked for water. Medical treatment was also said to have been denied to the sick.

Over a million migrants from countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Bangladesh have entered Malaysia in search of work. They play an important role in Malaysian economic life.

Increasing prosperity has expanded opportunities for employment to such an extent that labour shortages have become apparent.

However, thousands have ended up in detention camps. Some had entered the country illegally; others had arrived with the necessary papers but encountered problems after disputes with their employers.

In 1996 the Malaysian authorities admitted that more than 70 detainees had died in detention camps in the previous four years, but they denied all allegations of human rights violations. The authorities also set up a visitors' panel to study conditions in the camps, but this has so far failed to publish its findings. Instead of conducting a full, public inquiry into the conditions in the camps, the authorities' response to the Tenaganita report was to charge Irene Fernandez with "maliciously publishing false news". This is a violation of her right, under Article 19 of the UDHR, to freedom of opinion and expression. She has been charged because she cared about the rights of migrant workers and dared to speak out.

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Article 5

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"

Torture is forbidden at all times and in all circumstances. No one should suffer treatment or punishment that is cruel or makes them feel less than human. These rules apply everywhere – in police stations, prisons, on the streets, in peacetime or during a war.

Article 19

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

Asma Jahangir

Harassed for defending women's rights

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For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to:

Amnesty International, International Secretariat,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Asma Jahangir has been threatened and harassed for defending a woman's right to choose her husband, and for criticizing those who seek to violate this right. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the authorities to protect women's rights campaigners and other human rights activists. Write to:

+ Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif
Office of the Prime Minister
Islamabad, Pakistan

+ President Farooq Leghari
Office of the President
Aiwan-e Sadar, Islamabad, Pakistan

+ Minister of State for Women's Affairs
Tahmina Daultana
Ministry for Women's Affairs & Social Welfare
Pak Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Asma Jahangir

‘They have done everything to intimidate me... They have even turned on my two young daughters... I have had to send them out of the country. Sometimes you have to pay such an unbearable price for what you believe in.’

Asma Jahangir

Asma Jahangir is a human rights lawyer, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, and a member of the Women’s Action Forum.

She has been harassed and threatened because of her work on a whole range of human rights issues, including bonded labour and the treatment of child prisoners. Most recently she has been attacked for her public criticism of the blasphemy law and for her defence of women’s rights.

The blasphemy law carries a mandatory death sentence in Pakistan. It is vaguely worded and so can be used to limit the rights to freedom of belief and expression – rights guaranteed by Articles 18 and 19 of the UDHR.

In 1995 Asma Jahangir defended Salamat Masih, who had been sentenced to death for blasphemy for allegedly scribbling blasphemous words on the walls of a mosque. At the time of the alleged offence Salamat Masih was only 14 years old and illiterate. During the trial hearings, Islamists shouted slogans and interfered with proceedings. Death threats were made against the accused, defence lawyers and the judge. Salamat Masih was acquitted on appeal within a month of being sentenced as there were no witnesses and no material evidence against him. Shortly after the acquittals, a gang of armed men forced their way into the house of Asma Jahangir’s brother to look for her, but she escaped.

More recently, Asma Jahangir defended a 22-year-old woman, Saima Wahid, whose father sought to have her marriage declared illegal by the courts because she had married without his consent. Saima Wahid spent 11 months in a women’s shelter for fear that her father might kill her. In March 1997 the Lahore High Court ruled that the consent of a male guardian was not required for a marriage to be valid. The case was important in defending a woman’s right to choose her husband – a right which is under attack. In September 1996 the Lahore High Court had ruled that a Muslim woman cannot marry without the consent of her male guardian and that any marriage contracted without this consent is not valid. Article 16 of the UDHR guarantees all adults the right to marry.

There is concern for the safety of Asma Jahangir and other women’s rights campaigners and human rights activists who are being threatened and harassed because of their defence of human rights.

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Article 16

“Men and women... have the right to marry and to found a family”

All adults have the right to marry, regardless of their race, country or religion. Both partners have equal rights in the marriage, and their free and full agreement is needed for the marriage to take place. The family is entitled to protection by the state.

ARTICLE 18

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”

You have the right to hold views on any issue you like without fear of punishment or censure. You also have the right to believe in any religion – or none at all. You have the right to change your religion if you wish, and to practice and teach your religion or beliefs.

Left: Asma Jahangir with Saima Wahid outside the court © Rahat Dar/NEWSLINE

Cover: © HRCP

Aleksandr Nikitin

Imprisoned for exposing nuclear accidents

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

After blatantly unfair investigative proceedings, Aleksandr Nikitin faces up to 20 years in prison for his writings on the environment. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the Russian Federation for all criminal charges against Aleksander Nikitin to be dropped, as he committed no criminal offence in peacefully exercising the right to freedom of expression. Write to:

+ President Boris Yeltsin
g. Moskva, Kreml
Russian Federation
Fax: 7095 206 51 73

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Aleksandr Nikitin

‘I am convinced that... international attention and support... will influence...

further judicial proceedings in the case, so that these will be in full conformity with universally accepted international principles.’

Aleksandr Nikitin

Aleksandr Nikitin, a retired naval captain, faces up to 20 years in prison for publicizing the environmental consequences of accidents on Russian nuclear submarines. The Russian authorities say he has committed treason, but all the evidence indicates that his ‘crime’ was nothing more than exercising his right to freedom of expression as guaranteed by Article 19 of the UDHR. The investigation proceedings against him have been blatantly unfair.

Aleksandr Nikitin is 45 years old; he is married and has one daughter. He joined the Russian navy as an engineer on nuclear submarines in 1974, later working at the Ministry of Defence as a senior inspector at the Safety Inspectorate for Nuclear Installations, and as a director. He retired in 1992.

In 1994 the Bellona Foundation — a Norwegian environmental organization — offered him work as a consultant, asking him to gather material for, and to co-write, Chapter 8 of their report, *The Russian Northern Fleet -- Sources of Radioactive Contamination*. Aleksandr Nikitin and the Bellona Foundation have consistently maintained that the information used for this chapter came from previously published sources.

In February 1996 he was arrested by the Federal Security Service (FSB) and charged with treason in the form of espionage.

The FSB appears to have been more concerned with putting Aleksandr Nikitin in jail than in helping to establish the truth through a fair process of judicial determination. It has made unsubstantiated allegations against him, not only in the course of the investigation but also to the press, and has obstructed him from preparing an adequate defence. These actions violate Articles 10 and 11 of the UDHR, which guarantee the right to a fair trial.

In December 1996 Aleksandr Nikitin was released pending trial.

On 9 September 1997 he was presented with a new indictment by the FSB, the fifth since his arrest. The charges continue to be based on an unpublished, secret decree which the FSB is applying retroactively. Decree No. 55 of the Ministry of Defence was issued in September 1996, seven months after Aleksandr Nikitin’s arrest.

Aleksandr Nikitin could now face a 20-year prison sentence – on grounds of which he is not fully aware – simply because he has publicized known information about the environment.

If he is convicted, further arbitrary prosecutions of innocent people by the FSB may follow.

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Article 10

“Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

Article 19

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

Left: Aleksandr Nikitin outside the detention centre in St Petersburg © Bellona Foundation
Cover: © Bellona Foundation

Osman Murat Ülke
Imprisoned for conscientious objection to military service
Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Osman Murat Ülke has been repeatedly imprisoned for his refusal, on grounds of conscience, to perform military service. He has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask for the immediate and unconditional release of Osman Murat Ülke, for all charges against him to be dropped and for recognition of the right to conscientious objection to military service. Write to:

+ The Minister of Defence
Milli Savunma Bakanlıđı
06100 Ankara, Turkey

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Osman Murat Ülke

‘Killing a person is the most obvious way of violating the right to life. Therefore, conscientious objection... is my responsibility.’

Osman Murat Ülke

Osman Murat Ülke, Chairperson of the now banned Izmir War Resisters' Association (ISKD), was detained in Izmir, Turkey, on 7 October 1996, more than a year after he publicly burned his call-up papers and declared at a press conference that, as a pacifist, he would not perform military service. Turkey's system of conscription for military service makes no provision for conscientious objection. This clearly violates Article 18 of the UDHR, which guarantees the right to freedom of thought and conscience.

Every year in Turkey young men are detained or prosecuted in connection with their refusal on grounds of conscience to perform military service.

On 19 November 1996 Osman Murat Ülke was put on trial in the Military Court of the General Staff in Ankara, charged under Article 155 of the Turkish Penal Code and Article 58 of the Military Penal Code with "alienating the public from the institution of military service". The trial was adjourned and Osman Murat Ülke was released, only to be detained by the gendarmerie and taken to his military unit. Since then he has been repeatedly disciplined, including being held in solitary confinement, and charged in connection with his refusal to wear military uniform and to obey military orders.

In January 1997 he was sentenced by the Military Court of the General Staff in Ankara to six months' imprisonment and a fine on the original charge. In March 1997 he received a five-month prison sentence from a Military Court in Eskişehir for "continuing disobedience".

Meanwhile, in February 1997 Osman Murat Ülke was again put on trial on charges of "alienating the public from the institution of military service", this time along with 11 defendants from the ISKD and the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD). The charges related to a book published by the IHD in July 1996 which included a statement sent to the IHD by the ISKD. The authorities' prosecution of members of these two organizations violates Articles 19 and 20 of the UDHR concerning the right to express and communicate your views and to freedom of association.

Osman Murat Ülke was conditionally released in May 1997, but taken into custody again on 9 October at a further hearing in his trial at Eskişehir Military Court.

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Left: Turkish soldiers. Turkey still has no alternative civilian service. © Hollandse Hoogte

Sevil Dalkølc

**Imprisoned on the basis of a statement extracted under torture
Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

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1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Lawyer Sevil Dalkølc was tortured and sentenced to 30 years in prison after an unfair trial. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask that she be granted a fair trial and that her allegations of torture be thoroughly and impartially investigated. Call for those responsible to be brought to justice. Write to:

+ The Minister of Justice
Adalet Bakanlıđđ
06659 Ankara, Turkey

+ The Minister of the Interior
İçişleri Bakanlıđđ
Ankara, Turkey

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sevil Dalkølc

‘Where is the law? All of the rules were broken.’

Sevil Dalkøløç

Sevil Dalkøløç is a Turkish lawyer. In 1995, in what appears to be a grave miscarriage of justice, she was sentenced to 30 years’ imprisonment on the basis of statements which she had made under torture. She was apparently targeted because of her political and professional activities, activities to which she is entitled under Articles 19 and 20 of the UDHR.

When Sevil Dalkøløç was detained in March 1994, she had been investigating the death in suspicious circumstances of a man of Kurdish background. The Turkish Government and illegal armed Kurdish groups are engaged in a violent conflict, and there were allegations of state involvement in the man’s death. The dead man’s brother, who had asked Sevil Dalkøløç to take on the case, was later a fellow defendant in her trial.

Sevil Dalkøløç was taken from her home in the middle of the night and held at Ankara Police Headquarters for 15 days. During this time she was subjected to death threats and threats of rape, sexually abused, beaten, subjected to electric shocks, hosed with pressurized water and deprived of food, sleep and access to toilet facilities. She suffered a bilaterally dislocated jaw due to beating. According to Article 5 of the UDHR no human being should suffer such torture.

The statement that Sevil Dalkøløç had made in police custody was brought as evidence in her trial at Ankara State Security Court on charges of membership of the illegal Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK), handling explosives and separatism. The statement was not supported by any forensic evidence or eye-witness testimony. The only other evidence brought before the court was police statements and statements made — apparently also under duress — by other defendants in the trial. In court Sevil Dalkøløç retracted her statement, alleging that it had been extracted under torture. However, the court appears to have conducted no investigation into her complaint.

Article 10 of the UDHR guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing; the courts should be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions. Sevil Dalkøløç has been denied her fundamental rights. Amnesty International is calling for her retrial and for an investigation into her allegations of torture.

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Article 5

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Torture is forbidden at all times and in all circumstances. No one should suffer treatment or punishment that is cruel or makes them feel less than human. These rules apply everywhere — in police stations, prisons, on the streets, in peacetime or during a war.

Article 10

“Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

Left: Copies of the UDHR being circulated at a human rights rally in Istanbul
© Z. Aknar/Cumhuriyet

The destruction of childhood

Defend the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Thousands of Ugandan children have been abducted and abused by the LRA. They have been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the Government of Sudan to intervene with the LRA to free abducted children. Write to:

+ President of the Republic of Sudan
Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
People’s Palace, PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The destruction of childhood

‘Please do your best to tell the world what is happening to us, the children. So that other children don’t have to pass through this violence.’

Message to Amnesty International from a 15-year-old Ugandan girl

Fifteen-year-old V.* was abducted in northern Uganda by the armed opposition Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in December 1996.

All members of the LRA are expected to act in accordance with certain fundamental principles of humanity, as reflected in the UDHR. Abduction is contrary to Article 3, which guarantees the right to life, liberty and security of person.

V. was made into a child soldier and forced to kill a boy who tried to escape. She witnessed a boy being hacked to death and was beaten for dropping a water container under fire.

V. was effectively “owned” by the LRA and treated as a slave. Article 4 of the UDHR states that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude. She was made to carry heavy loads on long journeys, to prepare food and to perform other domestic tasks. Like other abducted girls, V. was raped in a forced “marriage” to a more senior LRA soldier. Article 5 of the UDHR prohibits torture and ill-treatment, including rape.

V. escaped, and has been reunited with her family, but thousands of other children are still being abused by the LRA. Since 1986, thousands of them have been abducted. Some 3,000 are believed to have escaped, but thousands more have been killed during armed combat or executed by the LRA. Most of the children abducted are between 13 and 16 years old. They are beaten, forced to fight well-armed government troops and to commit human rights abuses, including murdering villagers and other children who try to escape. Traumatized by what they have done, and believing that they are outcasts, they become bound to the LRA.

The LRA is fighting the Ugandan Government. It is an army of child soldiers, led by a man claiming possession by holy spirits, whose main tactic is violence and terror directed at civilians. Several thousand northern Ugandan villagers have been mutilated, raped and killed by the group.

The LRA has bases in Sudan and is supported and armed by the Government of Sudan. The Sudanese Government has the power to intervene to free the children abducted by the LRA, but instead uses the LRA to fight armed opposition groups in Sudan. This makes the Sudanese Government—which is bound by the UDHR—also responsible for LRA abuses.

*name withheld

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Article 3

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

Article 4

" No one shall be held in slavery or servitude"

Human beings must not be owned, bought or sold. No one has the right to enslave anyone else. Slavery is a crime.

Front and left: drawings by a former child soldier

The text says “Mother, get out of the hut and let the boy show us the way”.

Tsitsi Tiripano

Discriminated against for supporting the human rights of gays and lesbians

Defend the defenders of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Tsitsi Tiripano has been discriminated against and harassed for defending the human rights of gays and lesbians. She has been denied rights that the world has said should never be violated.

Ask the authorities to ensure that the rights of Tsitsi Tiripano and other GALZ members are respected. Write to:

+ President Robert Mugabe
The President’s Office
P Bag 7700, Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

+ Police Commissioner
Augustine Chihuri
PO Box 8807, Police HQ
Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

Sign your name in the books circulating around the world in which countless other people are pledging to do everything in their power to promote the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Tsitsi Tiripano

‘I don’t believe they [lesbians and homosexuals] have any rights at all.’
President Robert Mugabe, 2 August 1995

‘Don’t hate! Tolerate!’
Slogan from a poster by Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)

Tsitsi Tiripano (a pseudonym) is a member of the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) organization. In 1996 she was working as a volunteer at a stand organized by GALZ at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in Harare. The stand displayed educational material discussing human rights issues — such as what homosexuality is and why gay rights are human rights, the legal position of gays and lesbians in Zimbabwe, and information about a GALZ-sponsored counselling service. On the last day of the book fair, a group of people belonging to an anti-gay pressure group attacked the stand, burning the GALZ literature and threatening violence against lesbians and gays. Tsitsi Tiripano and other GALZ volunteers were forced to flee. Despite requests from GALZ and the book fair organizers for police protection, the authorities took no steps to protect GALZ members. Law enforcement officers allegedly said that gays and lesbians had no right to police help if attacked. Article 7 of the UDHR guarantees that everyone has the right to equal protection of the law, without discrimination.

GALZ had won a legal battle to overturn the government ban on their participation in the Book Fair; it had been denied a stand in 1995. Such bans violate Articles 19 and 20 of the UDHR which guarantee freedom of expression and association. By trying to silence groups such as GALZ, the authorities are also violating Article 27 of the UDHR, which guarantees everyone the right freely to participate in the cultural life of their community. Photographs of Tsitsi Tiripano, taken at the Book Fair, were published in the press, along with anti-gay and lesbian articles. When she returned to her rural hometown, she faced protests, hostility and discrimination as a result of the hysteria whipped up by the press and by anti-gay and lesbian statements from prominent figures, including President Mugabe.

Lesbians and gays in Zimbabwe have been denied the right not to suffer discrimination and to be accorded all rights set out in the UDHR without distinction, as guaranteed by Article 2 of the UDHR. GALZ members have been attacked, threatened and harassed for carrying out their work as human rights activists and seeking to defend their human rights — rights which all governments, including the Government of Zimbabwe, have pledged to uphold.

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Article 2

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind”

You should not suffer discrimination, or be deprived of any of your rights, because of your race, colour, sex, language, religion or political opinions. When it comes to respect for your basic rights, it

should not matter what country you were born in, what social class you belong to, or how rich or poor you are. Everyone should enjoy all the rights in the UDHR.

Article 27

“Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community”

No one may stop you joining in cultural events organized within your community. You have the right to enjoy music, plays, exhibitions, poetry or any other form of artistic or collective expression. You have the right to share in the benefits that scientific discovery may bring.

Left: GALZ display at the 1997 Zimbabwe International Book Fair. Police again failed to protect GALZ literature, which was burned. © Brenda Burrell