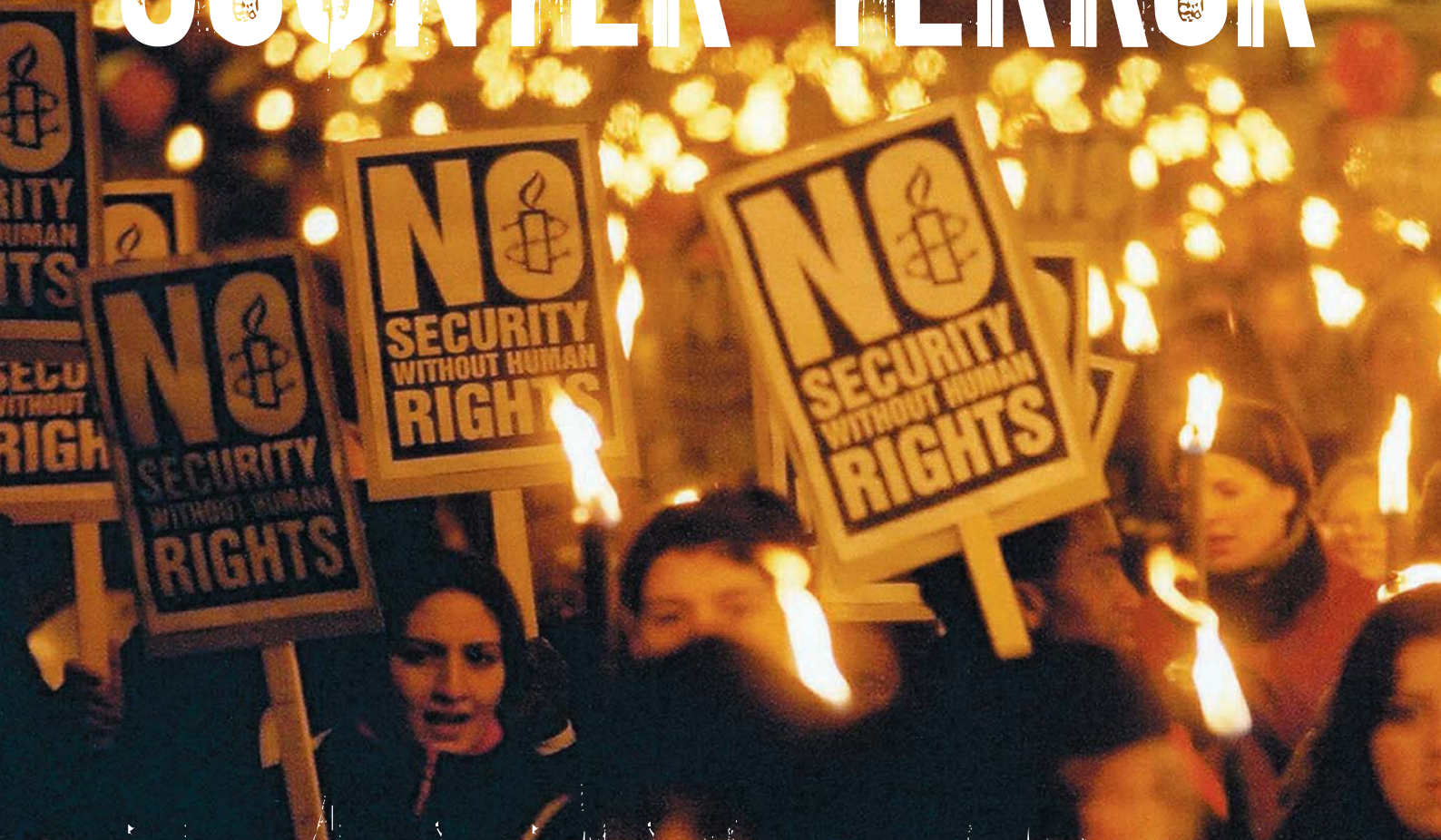


TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR



DEFENDING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

amnesty
international



TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR

For further information about Amnesty International's concerns and activities, please see www.amnesty.org

Terrorism is an assault on people's fundamental human rights.

Amnesty International (AI) has consistently condemned the heinous attacks in recent years that have left thousands of civilians dead or maimed.

Among the targets of such attacks have been: New York and Washington DC, USA in September 2001; Bali, Indonesia in October 2002; Casablanca, Morocco in May 2003; Istanbul, Turkey in November 2003; Madrid, Spain in March 2004; London, UK in July 2005; Amman, Jordan in November 2005; Dahab, Egypt in April 2006; and Mumbai, India in July 2006.

AI condemns any deliberate attacks on civilians, whether through planting bombs in restaurants or railway stations or bringing down buildings killing thousands. The deliberate targeting of civilians constitutes a serious abuse of fundamental human rights and runs counter to basic principles of humanity. AI calls for those who commit such atrocities to be brought to justice. Deliberately attacking civilians can never be justified.

AI urges all armed groups and individuals to stop using violence against civilians in pursuit of their aims. Violence and terror only breed more violence and terror.

AI calls on leaders of armed groups to denounce human rights abuses – including torture, hostage-taking and direct or indiscriminate attacks on civilians – and to take action to prevent perpetrators from repeating such abuses. Where possible, AI addresses its concerns

directly to the leadership of such groups: for example, in 2002 AI delegates met representatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE); and in 2005 it sent an open letter with other organizations to the leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) (*ASA 31/046/2005*). AI has also met and written directly to Hamas and Hizbullah expressing its concerns.

Crucially, AI urges all governments not to respond to terror with terror. It has repeatedly exposed and condemned human rights violations committed in the name of security as well as measures that undermine fundamental human rights, such as torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Torture does not stop terror. Torture is terror. The last five years have seen a backlash against human rights in the name of the "war on terror".

All Amnesty International documents mentioned in this booklet can be found online at <http://web/amnesty.org/library/engindex> (AI Index No. is given in brackets).

Cover: a demonstration in Oslo, Norway in December 2001 at the time of the Nobel peace prize, used the slogan "No security without human rights".

Right: Irene Khan, AI Secretary General, lays flowers at Kings Cross station following bomb attacks on London's commuters in July 2005. The attacks killed 52 people and injured about 700.

All photos © AI



“Protecting our human rights is an essential component of protecting our security.”

AI Secretary General Irene Khan



“Amnesty International is outraged at the attacks carried out in the USA, involving the hijacking of civilian aircraft and resulting in thousands of men, women and children being killed, maimed or injured.”

Public statement, 12 September 2001
(AMR 51/134/2001)

Not every human rights abuse can be attributed to the “war on terror”, but there is no doubt that it has given a new lease of life to repression.

It has provided an effective smokescreen for governments to authorize arbitrary detention, torture, unfair trial, suppression of political dissent, and ethnic persecution, knowing that any international criticism will be muted.

But this “war” has other victims too. Across the world, forgotten conflicts have taken a bloody toll. In Darfur, more than two million people have been displaced, more than

Below: A Pakistan Peace Coalition vigil in Karachi, Pakistan, attended by various non-governmental organizations, including AI Pakistan, shortly after the attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001.



200,000 have died, thousands have been raped, and the atrocities continue unabated. Intermittent attention and feeble action by the UN and the African Union have fallen pathetically short of what is needed.

In Israel and the Occupied Territories, people’s distress, despair and fear have grown as governments resolutely looked elsewhere. The international community also failed to challenge grave violations by both sides during the war in Lebanon in July/August 2006.

A narrow focus on “terror” by governments and international institutions has led to a scandalous neglect of the world’s poor. In the South, the poor have been betrayed by the failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals; and disparity, discrimination and alienation continue to fester in the heart of the richest countries in the world.

Women’s human rights have also been a casualty, as forces hostile to women’s rights have gained ground in the current security environment. “War on terror” grabs attention – the war on women goes unnoticed. Some 25 per cent of women globally face sexual abuse at the hands of their partner, and many are murdered with impunity.

This briefing shows how the backlash against human rights in the “war on terror” has been vigorously challenged by AI activists around the world, as well as by other human rights defenders. Campaigning on all rights must continue. Without them none of us can be safe – whether from arbitrary arrest, sexual abuse, violent attacks or starvation.

AI’s public statements condemning violent attacks by armed groups and individuals include:

USA: Amnesty International appalled at devastating attack against civilians (AMR 51/134/2001)

Saudi Arabia: Amnesty International condemns the killing of civilians by armed group in al-Khober (MDE 23/006/2004)

UK: Amnesty International condemns bomb attacks in London (EUR 45/020/2005)

Spain: Amnesty International condemns Madrid bombing (EUR 41/002/2005)

Jordan: Attacks by armed groups show utter disregard for humanity (MDE 16/007/2005)

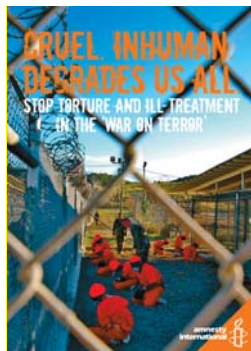
Egypt: Amnesty International condemns attack against civilians in Dahab (MDE 12/006/2006)

India: Amnesty International condemns multiple bomb attacks in Mumbai (ASA 20/017/2006)

CRUEL. INHUMAN. DEGRADES US ALL.

Campaign homepage:
[www.amnesty.org/
stoptorture](http://www.amnesty.org/stoptorture)

In the context of the “war on terror”, the absolute ban on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment has been flouted by governments around the world. States have inflicted unspeakable mental and physical suffering on detainees using methods so abhorrent and brutal that they have long been prohibited by international law. (See the AI website for reports – above left.)



Cruel. Inhuman. Degrades us all. Stop torture and ill-treatment in the “War on Terror” (ACT 40/010/2005)

The launch of AIUSA’s mobile billboard urging President Bush to “Tell the Truth about Torture” during the State of the Union address, Washington, January 2006.

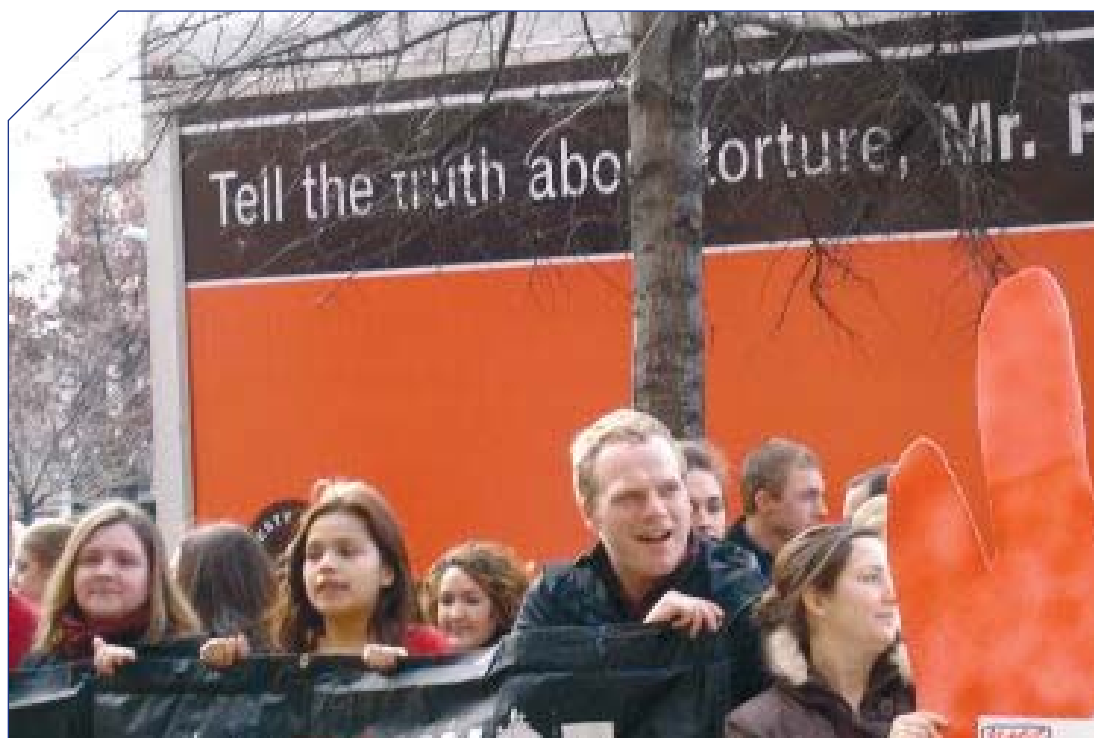
indicating a US administration far from committed to the international prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

In countries where torture and other ill-treatment were already common, governments have been encouraged by the new climate of tolerance towards such abuses. In others, draconian laws and abusive practices have been introduced.

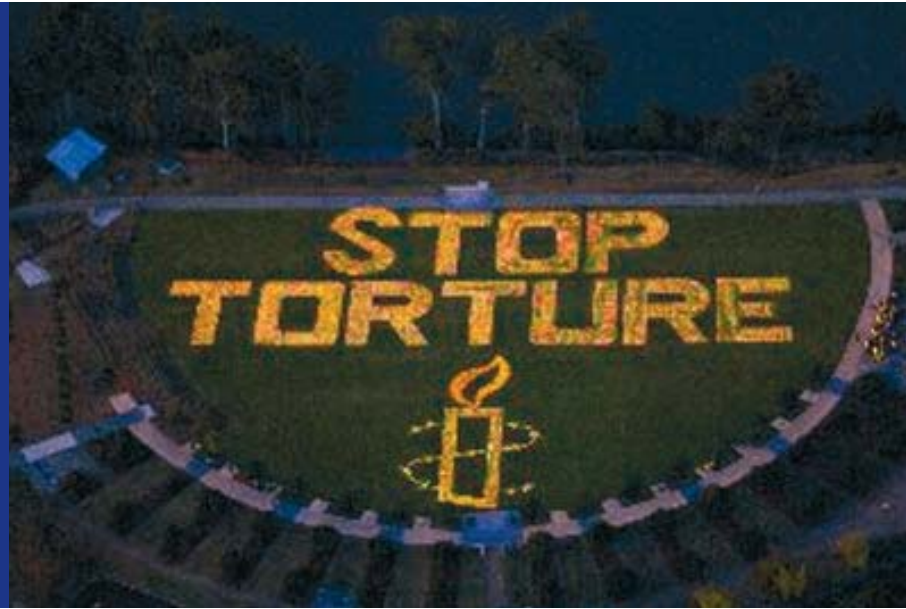
If governments use torture and other ill-treatment, they resort to the tactics of terror: Both torturers and terrorists rely on fear to achieve their aims. Both deny and destroy human dignity. Both assume the end justifies the means.

AI responded to the threat to perhaps the most universally accepted human right – the right not to be tortured – by launching an international campaign: **Cruel. Inhuman. Degrades Us All. Stop Torture and Ill-treatment in the “War on Terror”**. It calls on all governments to:

- ▶ **STOP** the abuses by condemning and prohibiting all torture and other ill-treatment.
- ▶ **INVESTIGATE** all allegations of such abuses.
- ▶ **PROSECUTE** any official who condones, acquiesces in or commits torture or ill-treatment.



AI Australia broke a world record by lighting 11,000 candles at the same time portraying STOP TORTURE and AI's logo in Brisbane in June 2006.



AI TAKES ACTION

AI Switzerland and AI Austria asked all their local members of parliament in 2005 to sign a declaration reaffirming the absolute prohibition of torture.

AIUSA hosted an online discussion in August 2006 with former army interrogator Peter Bauer. Their collaboration led to other former interrogators telling the US Congress that torture and other ill-treatment are unnecessary to win the “war on terror”. Read the interrogators' statement at www.amnestyusa.org/denounce_torture/statement_on_interrogation.pdf

AI Australia organized a national newspaper advertisement listing eminent Australians supporting AI's statement against torture. People at Adelaide airport dressed up as flight attendants and prisoners in orange jumpsuits for the Air Torture campaign, garnering national media coverage.

AI Sweden organized activities in 32 cities on human rights day in 2005 with the message “Torture is Never OK”.

ACTION WORKS

After intensive lobbying by AIUSA and others of members of Congress, US senators voted 90-9 in October 2005 to incorporate the McCain amendment into a defence spending bill, affirming the ban on cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees. The bill was signed into law in December 2005.

“There can be no justification or excuse for carrying out such attacks deliberately targeting civilians”.

Public statement after bombings in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on 23 July 2005 (MDE 12/030/2005)



The launch of AI Poland's action, “Stop torture in the war on terror”, Lubl

RENDITIONS



Hiding behind the rhetoric of the “war on terror”, the US and other governments have illegally detained people and secretly flown them to third countries, where they may suffer additional crimes including torture. In some cases, it appears that the subsequent interrogation under torture has been the main purpose of the transfer.

This unlawful practice of transferring people is known as rendition and is shrouded in secrecy. AI has painstakingly analysed flight records around the world and matched these with known cases of victims of rendition. It has also interviewed victims of rendition, including those who had been held in “black sites” – secret locations.

The results were published in April 2006 in *USA: Below the radar – secret flights to torture and “disappearance”* (see next page) ([AMR 51/051/2006](#)). The report received extensive media coverage and prompted many government responses, including promises to launch official investigations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK.

In June 2006 AI published *Partners in Crime: Europe’s role in US renditions* ([EUR 01/008/2006](#)). This exposed in detail the involvement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Macedonia, Italy, Sweden and the UK in six cases of rendition. In each case, the victims were bundled onto

CIA planes and transferred abroad, without due process, to detention sites where all say they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

Torture is wrong and illegal wherever it happens and whoever carries it out. Governments do not escape their obligation under international law by exporting people abroad to be tortured.

AI continues to call on all states to stop renditions – no one should be forcibly transferred abroad outside the rule of law. It also calls on states to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the human rights violations connected to this practice, and ensure full reparation to the victims and their families.

AI Greece stages a “Torture Free Skies” demonstration during the 4th European Social Forum in Athens, May 2006. AI Greece staged several successful actions during the Forum, including a well-attended stall on Torture/“War on Terror” and a street theatre show called “CIA airlines” condemning renditions.

