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Facts and Figures: The work of Amnesty International

This facts and figures sheet gives an overview of the work of Amnesty International and the work carried out by the organization in 1999.

1) The Beginning

Amnesty International was launched in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson.

His newspaper appeal, "The Forgotten Prisoners", was published worldwide on 28 May 1961 and brought in more than 1,000 offers of support for the idea of an international campaign to protect human rights.

Within 12 months the new organization had sent delegations to four countries to make representations on behalf of prisoners, and had taken up 210 cases. Amnesty International members had organized national bodies in seven countries. The first year's expenditure was £6,040.

The principles of strict impartiality and independence were established. The emphasis was on the international protection of human rights: Amnesty International members were to act on cases worldwide and not become involved in cases in their own countries.

2) Today

Amnesty International has more than 1,000,000 members, subscribers and regular donors in more than 140 countries and territories. There are more than 7,500 local, youth & student, and professional AI groups registered at the International Secretariat plus several thousand other youth & student groups, specialist groups, networks and coordinators in nearly 100 countries & territories throughout the world.

There are nationally organized sections in 55 countries, 34 of them in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Middle East and Central Europe.

The organization's nerve centre is the International Secretariat in London, with more than 320 permanent posts and over 100 volunteers from more than 50 countries. The Secretary General is Pierre Sané.

Amnesty International is governed by a nine-member International Executive Committee (IEC). It comprises eight volunteer members, elected every two years by an International Council comprising representatives of the worldwide movement, and an elected member of the International Secretariat.

3) Helping the victims

Amnesty International has a precise mandate, detailed in an international statute. The main focus of its campaigning is to:

- C free all prisoners of conscience. These are people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth or other status -- who have not used or advocated violence;*
- C ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners;*
- C abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel , inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners;*
- C end extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".*

Amnesty International also opposes abuses by opposition groups, including hostage taking, torture and killings of prisoners and other deliberate and arbitrary killings.

4) Campaigning for Human Rights

Each year, Amnesty International members around the world work on behalf of people threatened with imprisonment, unfair trials, torture or execution. This year's activities are an indication of the level of work done every year on behalf of these people.

Worldwide campaigns: *Each year, Amnesty International members from around the world join forces to campaign for the better part of a year on human rights issues in one country or on a particular human rights issue. These major campaigns involve reporting on major human rights issues, lobbying governments and ambassadors globally for change, publicizing human rights abuses, and working closely with local human rights activists and other community organizations to achieve change.*

A year-long campaign on human rights violations in the USA with a 150-page report, *Rights for All*, launched in October 1998, continued for most of 1999. The campaign focussed on police brutality, ill-treatment of prisoners, detention of asylum seekers, the death penalty and the USA's failure to uphold international law at home and abroad. Many of the issues highlighted during the campaign found increasing resonance within the country; authorities responded to AI's concerns and the media gave systematic coverage to the campaign, both within and outside the country. In 1999 this campaign was linked with AI's International Women's Day Action. There were campaigns on human rights abuses in countries such as Afghanistan, Brazil, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Territories, the Russian Federation, Togo, Tunisia and Turkey. AI members also lobbied around the International Labour Conference, the Organization of African Unity Ministerial Conference on Human rights, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Areas of increased priority in AI's work during the year included its work on identity based human rights violations; on the control of international military, security and police transfers; and on companies and human rights. See pages 6&7.

The Campaign to abolish the death penalty

Over 30 sections have Death Penalty Coordinators who organize hundreds of groups to work against the death penalty. Death Penalty Actions involving Amnesty International members in various activities are issued three or four times a year usually based around the situation in a particular country or group of countries. In 1999 the emphasis has been on achieving a worldwide moratorium on executions.

The statistics on executions are compiled each year by Amnesty International. In 1999 at least 1,813 people were executed in 31 countries. At least 3,857 people were sentenced to death in 63 countries. These figures include only cases known to AI; the figures are certainly higher.

The vast majority of executions worldwide are carried out in a tiny handful of countries. In 1999, 85 per cent of all known executions took place in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the USA.

*In China, preliminary figures indicated that at least 1,077 people were executed, although the true number was believed to be much higher.

* At least 165 executions were carried out in Iran.

* Ninety-eight people were executed in the USA.

* In Saudi Arabia, 103 executions were reported but the total may have been much higher.

* In Iraq, hundreds of executions were reported, but many of them may have been extrajudicial.

*As many as 100 people were executed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the movement towards abolition, by the end of 1999, 73 countries had abolished the death penalty for all offences. A further 13 countries had abolished it for all but exceptional crimes, such as war crimes. At least 22 further countries were abolitionist in practice: they had not carried out an execution in 10 years and were believed to have an established practice of not carrying out executions.

During 1999 the death penalty was abolished for all crimes in Bermuda, East Timor, Turkmenistan and Ukraine, and Latvia abolished it for all but exceptional crimes.

5) Working for individuals

Amnesty International members work for individuals or groups of people suffering the range of human rights violations in the organization's mandate -- from imprisonment as prisoners of conscience to "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution.

During 1999 AI's local groups worked on behalf of more than 4,500 named individuals, including prisoners of conscience and victims of other human rights violations, whose cases had been assigned to them as long-term **Action Files**, or as medium-term actions through a **Regional Action Network (RAN)**. There were 23 RANs, involving around 1,800 groups covering human rights abuses in every country of the world.

During the year, groups worked on more than 1,900 Action Files and RAN actions -- of which 317 had been launched during the year -- on behalf of victims of human rights violations in more than 100 countries & territories. AI was able to close more than 212 group assignments on the detention of prisoners of conscience and possible prisoners of conscience.

Rapid Action

Rapid action for prisoners and others who are in immediate danger of serious human rights violations is mobilized by the **Urgent Action (UA) network** made up of more than 80,000 volunteers in some 85 countries. Urgent Actions are distributed by the International Secretariat of Amnesty International in London by e-mail and fax to Sections worldwide who then distribute them to members of the UA network

asking them to send appeals by the fastest means possible. Each case can generate between 3 and 5,000 appeals.

In 1999 538 new actions were issued to the UA network on behalf of people in 86 countries and territories who were either at risk or had been victims of torture or ill-treatment, "disappearances", political killings and death threats, judicial executions, unfair trials, deaths in custody or *refoulement* (forcible return) of asylum-seekers. There were also 421 calls for further appeals on actions already issued, so that the network was activated a total of 959 times. Each UA or follow-up can generate hundreds of appeals to the authorities within days of being issued and several thousand within a few weeks.

Botswana: Tlhabologang Mauwe and Gwara Brown Motswetla, who were due to be hanged on 16 January 1999, were granted a stay of execution by a High Court judge on 15 January 1999. Deputy Attorney-General Tafa commented on the "avalanche" of letters that had arrived on behalf of the two men after the initial Urgent Action was issued.

Guatemala: On 23 July 1999, Guatemala's Ninth Court of Appeals ordered a re-trial in the case against Cándido Noriega, former military commissioner and ex-head of the local civil patrol in the Tululché area, who had previously been acquitted twice for more than 150 human rights violations perpetrated in the 1980's. Following the decision, Amnesty International received a message from one of the lawyers prosecuting the case on behalf of CONFREGUA, the Guatemalan Episcopal Conference: "Thank you for all of the unconditional support you gave us....we received a lot of letters via fax and e-mail....and it worked....your network really worked. Thanks a million!"

Uzbekistan: In May 2000 Amnesty International learned that Arsen Albertovich Arutyunyan and Danis Vladimirovich Sirazhev, both well-known Uzbek musicians, had their death sentences commuted to 15 years imprisonment. They have been moved from their death cell to a prison colony in the town of Andizhan. The families of the two men thank those who campaigned on their behalf. Arsen Arutyunyan's sister wrote to Amnesty International: "Had it not been for the work of your organisation, your approaches to the media, your persistent work, we couldn't have hoped for a good outcome. When I first turned to you, my whole family and I were desperate and, to tell the truth, didn't think that anything or anybody could help. But the miracle came true, a miracle worked not by God but by people. My brother Arsen learnt of the decision through his lawyer and couldn't believe it. It took 15 minutes for him to realise that he would stay alive. He kept repeating 'I'll live,' and 'I'm going to write new songs.'"

Refugees

AI sections around the world continued to intervene in hundreds of cases where asylum-seekers at risk of being returned to countries where they could face serious human rights violations.

This work included providing information to the authorities and to asylum-seekers' legal representatives about human rights abuses in the countries from which asylum-seekers had fled; raising AI's concerns about legislation and practice which inhibit access to asylum procedures or otherwise put at risk asylum-seekers in need of protection; and campaigning for fair and satisfactory asylum procedures and for the provision of effective and durable protection against *refoulement* (forcible return).

AI was increasingly concerned at the use of prolonged and sometimes arbitrary detention of asylum-seekers and intervened in a number of cases and jurisdictions. AIUSA launched a comprehensive report calling on the US government to comply with basic international human rights standard. AI Australia continued to campaign against the mandatory detention by the authorities of asylum-seekers who arrived without visas, a procedure which is in breach of international standards. AIUK issued a report on unaccompanied refugee children in the UK; AI Germany raised concerns with the German authorities about the restrictive refugee definition followed by the German courts and government.

Specialist Networks

Amnesty International has specialist networks -- groups of medical professionals, lawyers and others -- who use their specialist expertise to campaign for victims of human rights violations.

Health Professional Network

The Amnesty International network of health professionals consists of doctors, nurses, psychologists and other health professionals. The medical network has members and groups in around 35 countries on all continents. Members campaign on AI actions as well as contributing their professional expertise to the conduct of AI programs.

In 1999 the medical network celebrated its 25th anniversary since the establishment of the first AI medical group in Copenhagen in 1974. Six documents giving an overview of the medical network and its activities over the last 25 years and suggesting future action were published. The vision for action by health professionals had expanded from the initial idea of examining torture victims and documenting their

experiences through a wider engagement in the development of professional ethics.

In 1999 the network campaigned on 56 medical actions on cases from 25 countries. Medical actions included, for example, campaigning on behalf of imprisoned health professionals and for access to medical care for prisoners. The network also contributed to larger campaigns including the USA campaign which continued in 1999. Furthermore, individual medical experts offered their time by, for example, evaluating reports on torture or autopsy reports of deaths in custody.

An update on the 1998 report on lethal injection executions was published in September 1999. In addition, in December a document was published on a forensic workshop - held in 1998 in South Africa - on the application of forensic skills to the detection and documentation of human rights violations. Also, an electronic newsletter of interest to health professionals continued to be published fortnightly. Lastly, but importantly, work was undertaken to set up a web-site with information and resource material for the health professional network. This web-site was launched in February 2000 and can be accessed at: <http://www.web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf>

The International Legal Network

Lawyers, judges, magistrates, academics, law students and others in the international legal network who are familiar with the theory and practice of law have a vital role to play in Amnesty International's work.

Lawyers' groups contribute to Amnesty International's work in many ways: as technical advisers to the movement; as links between the movement and the wider legal profession; and as defenders of victims of human rights abuses, including other human rights defenders and promoters of legal reform.

The Legal Network works at the forefront of developments in international law. Since the adoption in July 1998 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute) the network has continued working actively for the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by lobbying all states to ratify the Rome Statute (the ICC will be established after the 60th state has ratified the Rome Statute) and, if necessary, for states to enact national laws that allow for full cooperation with the Court.

Military, security and police transfers

In 1999 more than 20 AI sections worldwide were engaged in campaigning work to oppose specific transfers of military, security and police (MSP) equipment, weaponry, training or personnel to countries where they were likely to facilitate human rights violations or breaches of humanitarian law. Such MSP research and campaigning has become a key focus of AI's work -- increasing the pressure on those directly responsible for human rights violations and highlighting the responsibility of supplier governments.

During the year MSP activists campaigned to halt a wide range of arms transfers including the sale of attack helicopters to Turkey; the supply of small arms, light weapons, military training and assistance to combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) conflict; and the provision of light strike aircraft, armoured personnel carriers, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and related military and security equipment and weaponry to the Indonesian military and security forces.

AI activists have also been involved in lobbying for the development and implementation of stringent controls on MSP transfers at the national, regional and global level.

A particular area of emphasis has been around the control of small arms and light weapons. In May 1999 AI joined more than 200 human rights organizations, development agencies, arms control watchdogs, church groups, grassroots women's organizations and medical associations to launch the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA).

The Network seeks to combat the global scourge of unregulated proliferation and misuse of small arms by tackling the problem from both the supply side -- lobbying for stringent arms export controls in arms producing states -- and from the demand side, using human rights education initiatives, arms destruction operations and ex-combatant demobilization schemes.

Companies

More than 20 AI sections had contact people working on approaches to companies in 1999. AI business groups continued to develop their contacts with companies based in their countries through seminars, round-table discussions and smaller bilateral meetings, at which AI promoted the responsibility of companies to adhere to human rights principles throughout their practices. AI groups held discussions with major oil companies and AI representatives spoke at national and international conferences on issues related to corporate conduct and human rights.

Work on Children's Rights

Thirty-two sections have a contact point for work on children. The Working Groups for Children have worked hard to promote awareness of children's rights within the AI movement and in 1998 this work formally became a priority for the movement. Having first framed an

overall strategy to guide the development of this work, good progress was made during 1999; some of the highlights are mentioned below.

We continued to campaign for an end to the use of children as soldiers, through the active involvement of several sections in national coalitions and through the IS presence in the International Coalition and IGO lobbying for the draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to raise the age of recruitment of child soldiers to 18.

The Children's Rights Action in November 1999 marked the 10th anniversary of the CRC. The campaigning materials we produced highlighted the fact that children's rights are still a long way from realisation, but also that in the worldwide acceptance of the Convention we have a powerful tool for campaigning for children's rights.

Other actions during 1999 including sustained work on Sierra Leone with initiatives highlighting issues relating to children, including rape and sexual abuse of girls, killing, mutilation and abduction, and child combatants. The major campaign on the USA gave prominence to the issues of the death penalty of minors and juvenile justice. We also increased the accessibility of Urgent Actions featuring children and young people to AI activists specialising on children's rights.

AI's links with key international and national children's rights NGOs continue to being formed. In 2000, AI will be calling for an end to torture of children as one of the goals of the 2000 Campaign Against Torture.

Work on Women's Rights

Thirty-five sections now have formally designated focal points or coordinators for their work on women. Together they form the Intersectional Women's Network, which acts as the leading advocate for campaigning on women's rights and bringing it into the mainstream in their sections and the AI movement.

Links with international and national women's NGOs have developed over this period, with AI being involved in a number of meetings and briefings with other organisations, and taking part in various e-mail discussion lists as well as supplying NGOs with AI materials on women.

Work on gender-sensitive research methodology was developed during 1999, with a Policy Manual being officially launched. Three training workshops on gender awareness have taken place in national sections.

AI participated actively in the UN Working Group drafting an Optional Protocol to the Women's Convention, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 1999.

The 1999 Women's Rights Action focussed on women in prisons in the USA and had good participation from the international movement. The theme for the 2000 Action is "The struggle for women's rights persists". This Action raises concern about state accountability as we prepare for the fifth year review of the UN Beijing Platform for Action. In the context of this Action, AI's women's network members are taking part in joint actions with other NGOs.

Work on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Rights

Around 30 sections now have LGBT contact points. This network leads AI's campaigning against human rights violations and discrimination perpetrated against individuals or groups based on sexual orientation. They are also involved in lobbying against discriminatory legislation in their countries which underpin human rights violations faced by LGBT communities.

During 1999, the network and the IS worked together to produce a handbook intended to enable AI members to get involved in promoting and defending the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. A Focus article on campaigning for lesbian and gay rights was produced in September 1999. The materials were well received at the International Lesbians and Gays Association (ILGA) Conference in South Africa in autumn 1999. In Spring 2000, a hugely successful speaking tour of the US and Western European countries by Zimbabwean gay and lesbian rights activists sponsored by several AI sections and their LGBT networks took place signalling a major breakthrough in terms of raising public awareness on LGBT rights and building links by AI's activists with LGBT rights communities.

6) Human rights education

Amnesty International's mandate aims to contribute to the observance of human rights throughout the world as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). To further this aim AI supports programs that help people understand and learn about human rights and how to defend them.

During 1999 AI sections in more than 50 countries continued to develop their programs and materials for human rights education. They lobbied governments to ensure that human rights were incorporated into official training and educational curricula in institutions ranging from

schools and universities to military and police academies. In several countries, such as Guyana, Israel, Mauritius and Nepal, AI members worked closely with other non-governmental organizations and the relevant authorities to provide advice on the contents of teaching or training curricula.

AI members organized individual workshops and human rights training programs aimed at different target groups, such as teachers, women's groups and journalists. For example:

AI Nepal secured funding for a three-day seminar for police trainers at 10 different locations in Nepal;

AI Senegal organized a successful training seminar for journalists which recommended that human rights should be formally included as part of the curriculum in the National School of Journalism;

AI Paraguay had meetings with the Ministry of Justice which was preparing to sign an agreement to distribute the recommendations in AI's 12-point guide for good practice in the training and education for human rights of government officials.

7) Exposing the violations

AI confronts governments with its findings by issuing detailed reports and by publicizing its concerns in leaflets, posters, advertisements, newsletters and on the Internet; AI information is available on more than 250 websites worldwide. The address for the website of the International Secretariat is <http://www.amnesty.org>. It contains nearly 10,000 files and receives an average 4.5 million hits a month. It holds most AI reports since 1996 and all the latest news releases detailing AI's concerns about human rights stories around the world. Additionally

there is information on the latest campaigns and appeals for action to help protect human rights.

In 1999 Amnesty International issued 99 major external documents on human rights violations on 49 countries including in Azerbaijan, Burundi, China, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, India, Indonesia, Israel/Occupied Territories, Sudan, Uganda and the USA.

Throughout the year AI delegates visited more than 70 countries and territories to talk with victims of human rights violations and carry out on-the-spot investigations into human rights abuses, observe trials, or discuss AI's concerns with government authorities.

8) Human rights developments and treaties worldwide

Today an ever-growing human rights constituency is gathering the facts on abuses by governments, taking action to stop them and strengthening the forces necessary to prevent future violations.

- C More than 1,000 domestic and regional organizations are working to protect basic human rights;
- C An increasing body of international human rights agreements hold governments accountable for their actions;
- C 144 governments are now party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 142 governments are party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These covenants require countries ratifying them to recognize or protect a wide range of human rights;

- C 94 states are now party to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Protocol establishes procedures allowing both individuals and states to present complaints of human rights violations;
- C 43 states are now party 2nd Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
- C 119 governments are now party to the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- C 135 states are party to the Refugee Convention and 134 states are party to the Refugee Protocol

9) The continuing challenge

Every year Amnesty International produces a global report which details human rights violations against men, women and children in all regions of the world. The Annual Report for 2000, which detailed abuses during 1999, is indicative of the kinds and levels of abuses against people every year.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

- C Confirmed or possible extrajudicial executions were carried out in 38 countries in 1999.

“DISAPPEARANCES”

C People “disappeared” or remained “disappeared” from previous years in 37 countries.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

C People were reportedly tortured or ill-treated by security forces, police or other state authorities in 132 countries.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

C Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 61 countries.

UNFAIR TRIALS

C Political prisoners received unfair trials in 1999 in 51 countries.

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL

C People were arbitrarily arrested and detained, or in detention without charge or trial in 63 countries.

DEATH PENALTY

C Executions were carried out in 31 countries. Prisoners were under sentence of death in at least 63 countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

C Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights abuses, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and hostage-taking in 46 countries.

10) The Money

Amnesty International's funding reflects the movement's independence and its reliance on broad public support. No funds are sought or accepted from governments for Amnesty International's work investigating and campaigning against human rights violations. The hundreds of thousands of donations that sustain this work come from the pockets of its members and the public and organisations such as trusts, foundations and companies.

The international budget is spent on professional research by Amnesty International staff into human rights violations worldwide, on delegations that observe trials and make representations to governments, and on the movement's international public information, campaigning and development activities.

During the 12 months to 31 March 2000 the International Secretariat had expenditure of £17,815,000 in the following areas:

Research and Action	6,968,000
Campaigning	1,777.000
Publications and Translation Costs	2,130.000
Human Rights Education & Promotion	1,549.000
International Meetings	411.000
Administrative Costs of:	

<i>Finance, Planning, Audit & Depreciation</i>	<i>1,250.000</i>
<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>1,279.000</i>
<i>Information Technology</i>	<i>525.000</i>
<i>Facilities Costs & General Administration</i>	<i>1,926.000</i>

In addition relief payments to victims of human rights violations and their families totalled £235,000 during this period.