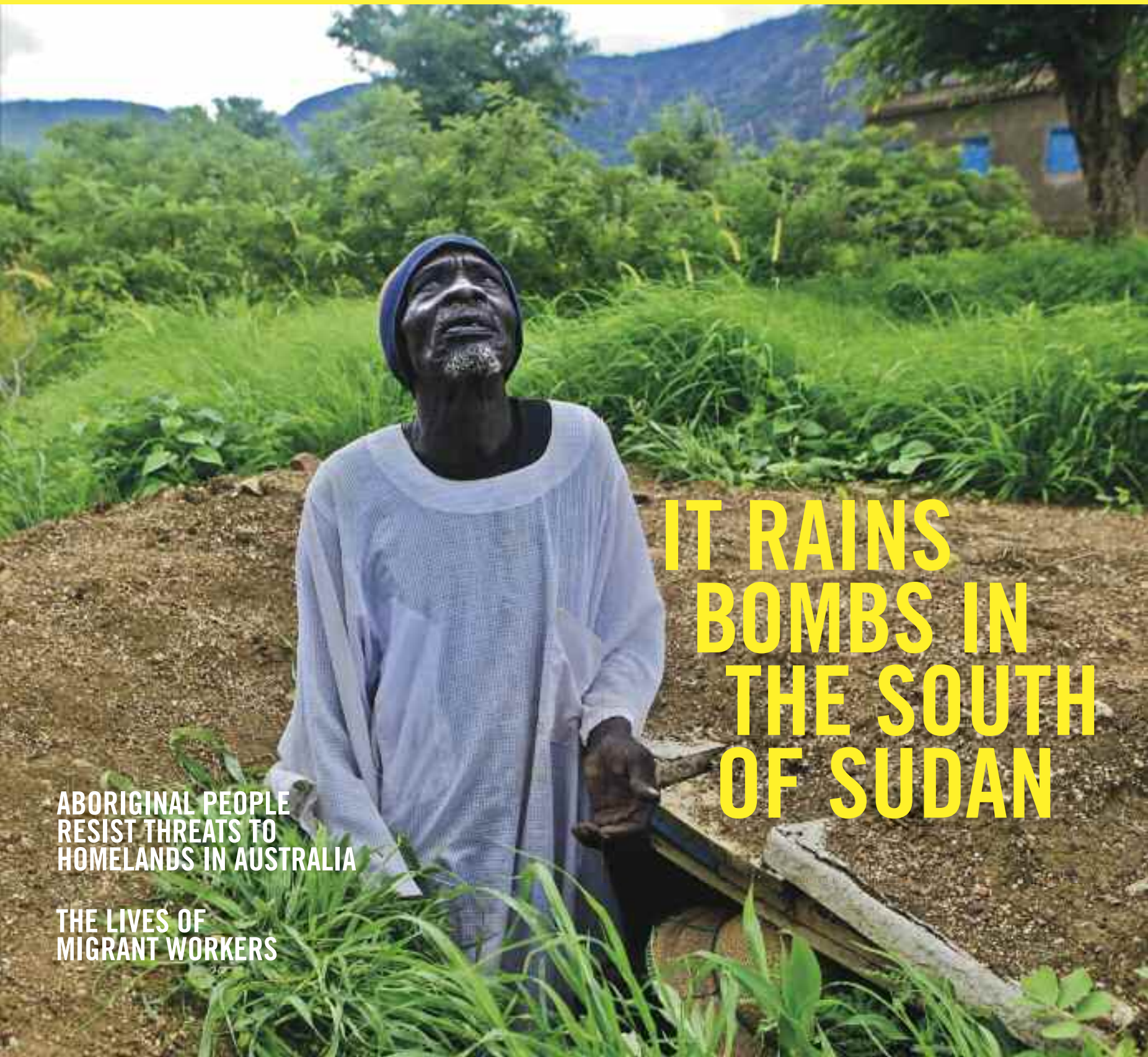


WIRED

FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS
JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012 VOLUME 42 ISSUE 001

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



IT RAINS BOMBS IN THE SOUTH OF SUDAN

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
RESIST THREATS TO
HOMELANDS IN AUSTRALIA

THE LIVES OF
MIGRANT WORKERS

Amnesty International supporters in UK during Global Day of Action for Egypt, London, February 2011.

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Welcome to WIRE,

How to inspire people to act? This question is on our minds with every new issue of WIRE.

Taking action requires determination and optimism, and that is not always easy. For the thousands of people

who campaigned for years to save Troy Davis, his execution in September was a terrible blow. But giving up is not an option. And we know that the campaign succeeded in raising awareness and strengthening the call to abolish the death penalty.

This momentum can help save others from death row.

Activism is the ultimate gesture of solidarity and hope. So please pay special attention to those all-important “act now” calls at the end of each article –

how they end is quite literally in your hands.

yours,
Wire team

Send your comments and suggestions to:

WIRE
Editorial and Publishing Programme
Amnesty International
International Secretariat
Peter Benenson House
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW
United Kingdom

or email us on
yourwire@amnesty.org

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Cover photo: The only warning of aerial bombing in Southern Kordofan, Sudan, is the drone of Sudanese Armed Forces planes. A man in Kurchi watches an Antonov flying overhead, August 2011.
© Carsten Stormer

GETTING WIRE

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INSIDE THIS WIRE

THE AGENDA

News from Amnesty International's regional teams and campaigns. Sign and send a **POSTCARD** demanding security of tenure for slum residents in Cairo.

PAGE 2

A MIGRANT'S JOURNEY

Migrants face various risks and challenges every day of their lives. Three campaigns to know about.

ROBERT GODDEN, GIORGOS KOSMOPOULOS and SARAH SHEBBEARE.



PAGE 8

'THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE DOESN'T END WITH ME'

How did the execution of Troy Davis affect the campaign to end the death penalty?

ROSEANN RIFE



PAGE 13

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES' HOMELANDS IN JEOPARDY IN AUSTRALIA

Support the Alyawarr and Anmatyerr Peoples as they struggle to keep their homelands and traditional way of life. **SARAH MARLAND**



PAGE 16

**ACT NOW
WORLDWIDE APPEALS
READ, DISTRIBUTE, ACT
SEE OUR INSERT
UPDATES ON PAGE 21**

DEATH FROM THE SKIES

The Sudanese authorities are bombing civilians in Southern Kordofan. It is time for the international community to act to stop the killings, says **KHAIRUNISSA DHALA.**



PAGE 4

IRAN'S KILLING SPREE

Executions of drug offenders are on the rise in Iran.

ANN HARRISON

PAGE 12

LIVING IN HELL

Chilling testimonies from Yodok, one of North Korea's political prison camps.



PAGE 14

WIRE INTERVIEW

The people of Central African Republic have been facing decades of conflict and abuse. Human rights defender **LEWIS-ALEXIS MBOLINANI** talks to **WIRE.**

PAGE 18

The Agenda

News from Amnesty International's regional teams and campaigns



Middle East and North Africa Forced evictions in Egypt

People living in dangerous conditions in some of Egypt's slums face eviction without being consulted about their resettlement options. Many are at risk of being made homeless. In September, Amnesty International brought children from five slums to the banks of the Nile to perform theatre plays and dances at the First Arabic Book Fair, and used publications and photos to raise awareness of forced evictions in Africa.

<http://tinyurl.com/egyptslums>
Sign and send the postcard in the insert, urging Egypt's Prime Minister to prevent forced evictions.

Asia and the Pacific Japan backtracks on death penalty

Japan's Justice Minister Hideo Hiraoka is under pressure to sign death warrants, despite a recent announcement that he would not approve executions. Hideo Hiraoka recently committed to suspend executions until Japan's use of the death penalty had been reviewed. However, with the review still in progress, the Minister announced in October that he did not intend to

end capital punishment. There are currently 126 people on death row in Japan.

<http://tinyurl.com/japandp>

Africa Ugandan journalists under attack

Journalists in Uganda are increasingly being harassed for expressing views deemed critical of the authorities. Meanwhile, public protests have been banned and four political activists charged with treason, a capital offence, for organizing protests. "The Ugandan authorities are creating a climate where it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to freely criticize government officials, their policies or practices," said Amnesty International's Researcher Godfrey Odongo.

<http://tinyurl.com/ugandajournalists>

22 journalists and media workers killed in Russia between 2000 and 2010.

(Source: Committee for the Protection of Journalists)

<http://tinyurl.com/bsjls2j>

Americas

Success in ancestral land battle

The Sawhoyamaxa Indigenous community in Paraguay could soon return to their ancestral land following an agreement by the authorities to purchase a 14,404-hectares plot. Ninety Sawhoyamaxa families have fought a legal battle to return to a portion of their lands, while living in precarious conditions alongside a nearby highway. The community has campaigned for years with the help of local and international groups, including Amnesty International.

<http://tinyurl.com/landwin>

Europe and Central Asia

Finland must investigate renditions

The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has published information revealing more than 100 landings in Finland by aircraft linked to the CIA's rendition and secret detention programmes. However, the Ministry said that they were only seeking clarification from the USA on one flight. Amnesty International is calling on Finland to investigate further and determine whether USA rendition flights landed in the country.

<http://tinyurl.com/finlandflights>

Syria Uprising

Syrian activist killed

Activist Ghayath Mattar is reported to have been killed in custody following his arrest by Syrian security forces on 6 September. His body was returned to his family on 10 September. Four other Syrian activists arrested at the same time are in grave danger. Act on their behalf at www.eyesonsyria.org



Cells in Liberia's Monrovia Central Prison are so overcrowded that some prisoners sleep on hammocks made from empty rice bags tied to the cell bars and windows. Amnesty International has called on Liberia to improve the appalling conditions witnessed in four of the country's 15 prisons.

<http://tinyurl.com/liberia-prisons>



© Glenna Gordon

2 1/2
years in prison
for three Azerbaijani
opposition activists
who organized peaceful
pro-reform protests.

Death Penalty

Executions breach international law

On 21 September, the day the USA executed Troy Davis (see p.13), Iran publicly hanged 17-year-old Alireza Molla-Soltani despite international prohibitions against executing juveniles. The same day, China executed Pakistani national Zahid Husain Shah for drug smuggling, even though drug offences do not meet the threshold for “most serious” crimes under international law.

<http://tinyurl.com/troydp>

Global Ethics Series

The Human Right to Health

A new publication from Amnesty International Global Ethics series is out in February 2011. *The Human Right to Health* explores current debates and ideas on the right to health. The book examines the idea of a human right assesses whether health meets those criteria and identifies the political and cultural realities we face in attempts to improve the health of people in wildly different regions. The author, Jonathan Wolff, is a professor of philosophy at university College London, UK. Available in English only.

<http://tinyurl.com/Health-Feb2012>

Up front

Life after eviction: The young women of Njemanze

Researcher
ASTER VAN
KREGTEN



© Amnesty International

In August 2009, the Nigerian Rivers State government forcibly evicted up to 17,000 residents of Njemanze, one of the informal settlements in Port Harcourt’s waterfronts.

Many of the older residents have since returned to their villages. But with no work there, many young

Above and top: Aster speaking to women evicted from Njemanze. men and women have stayed in the city. What happened to them two years after the eviction? We travelled to Port Harcourt to find out.

We met a group of young women in a neighbouring waterfront. What we witnessed was shocking. The women share tiny rooms in houses marked for demolition. Many are pregnant or have babies, and cannot afford food or essential medicines.

Before the 2009 eviction, all these young women were living with their parents, studying and supporting the family with informal jobs. “We used to feel free... and we could eat before we went to bed”, one woman told us. Their lives in Njemanze were hard, no doubt, but they were dignified. After the eviction, the women have been left with nothing. Now, they struggle to have even one meal a day.

Many women have no option but to sell sex to survive. They send some of the money to their families. Criminal gangs prey on the women, extorting the money they earn. These same gangs, and other men, also enter their rooms at night and rape them. When the women are arrested, police officers demand money, which they usually do not have, or sex before letting them go.

We asked the women what Amnesty International can do. They said that first of all, they want us to tell their stories. They also decided to protect their own rights and set up an alert network, which will take action when one of them is arrested.

We will continue to speak to Njemanze’s young women. In the meantime, we are documenting what we found and will be making recommendations to the Nigerian authorities on what they need to do. The authorities should know: when they destroy homes, they also destroy lives.

Letters

Want your views and comments to appear in *The Agenda*? Write to us at yourwire@amnesty.org

“...truly women have a place, truly women have a face and truly the world has not been functioning well without the input, in every sphere, of women.”

Leymah Gbowee, one of three women awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize

DEATH FROM THE S



Conflict continues in Southern Kordofan, the Sudanese state bordering the newly independent South Sudan. While unarmed men, women and children are killed, the world looks the other way. Campaigner **KHAIRUNISSA DHALA** reports.

KIES

Sitting on boulders, overlooking the lush green that surrounds the Nuba Mountains in Southern Kordofan, you could almost forget that an internal armed conflict is taking place. But not for long. The group of people sitting there suddenly hear the familiar drone of an Antonov plane, and before the aircraft has emerged from the clouds, they have run to seek shelter in the caves they now call home.

A few minutes later, the sound of three explosions booms from across the mountain. Everyone on this side of the mountain is safe, today. However, the way the Sudanese government is carrying out the bombings – using bombs that cannot be targeted with precision – means that tomorrow they could be less fortunate.

On 26 June 2011, Hawatef Kober and her two teenage daughters Iqbaal and Maryam Musa Al-Rahima, came down from the mountains. They had been seeking shelter in caves, one hour from their home, for the past month, only going down to collect water and food from their home. “We were afraid of the planes which have been flying above us about three or four times every day”, Hawatef told us.

“I was in the house when the planes came. It was about 4pm and my daughters went to fetch water at the borehole. After they had dropped the bombs, neighbours brought Maryam to the house. She was dead – she was hit on the head – part of her head was gone. A neighbour told me to go to the graveyard because they had taken my other daughter Iqbaal there. I went and her injuries were so terrible, I could not even look”, Hawatef said.

Thirteen people, mostly women and children, were killed and over 20 injured on that day when six bombs dropped near Kurchi market.

A few days before, on 19 June in the village of Um Serdiba, Mahasin, a mother of 10 who was expecting her 11th child, was planting crops in a field near her home. “We heard a plane, an Antonov, circle above. There was an explosion and my wife was killed instantly; she was decapitated”, her husband Angelo al-Sir told us.

“My son Yasser, aged nine, was in the kitchen helping his older sister Amal, who was cooking. Yasser was hit in the head [by bomb fragments]. He ran outside screaming ‘Daddy, daddy, I’m hurt’. My daughter Amani, not yet two years old, was outside [in the courtyard] and was hit in the chest by fragments which went through her back. Her cousin Musa’ab [Al-Fakih], aged four, was killed next to her.”

Both Yasser and Amani died before Angelo could get them to safety. Several others died or were injured in the strike.

CONFLICT SPREADS

On 5 June fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the armed opposition Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) in

Kadugli, the capital of Southern Kordofan, and Um Durein, and quickly spread to other towns and villages. On 1 September, it reached neighbouring Blue Nile state.

Tensions had been growing between Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP), and the ruling party of the newly independent South Sudan, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), in the context of the government’s attempts to disarm the SPLA and the disputed outcome of the elections for the governorship of Southern Kordofan in May. These elections were narrowly won by the NCP candidate Ahmed Haroun, wanted since 2007 by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

Following the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011, the SPLM operating in Sudan became known as the SPLM-N (SPLM-North), and the SPLA became known as SPLA-N.

Southern Kordofan lies on the border with South Sudan and is home to large populations of Nuba people. During the 22-year civil war which ended in 2005, the Nuba took up arms against the Sudanese government.

In August 2011, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch spent a week in Southern Kordofan to investigate the impact of the conflict. The team was not able to reach the front lines or areas controlled by the SAF, but interviewed scores of people from those areas who had escaped the fighting.

GOING HUNGRY

Zenab Al-Ameen Hamis and her 10 children fled from Serifiya in late June, after the village was attacked by the Sudanese army and its allied militia. “I ran with my children and left everything behind,” Zenab said. “I had five *tukuls* (huts) and two sorghum stores. They all burned, and they stole cattle. I am waiting here for plastic sheeting. We received sorghum, but now we don’t have any.”

More than 200,000 people have been forced to flee their homes in Southern Kordofan, in fear of aerial bombardments by the SAF, fighting between the SAF and SPLA-N, and the threat of arrests and extrajudicial killings of Nuba people believed to support the SPLM-N.

Many of the displaced in areas controlled by the SPLA-N live in and around the Nuba Mountains, with little more than the clothes on their backs and some plastic sheeting for shelter. The bombings mean that people live in constant fear and many abandoned their fields at prime cultivation time.

The Sudanese government has actively blocked or severely restricted humanitarian aid to the region, in violation of international humanitarian law. The World Food Programme, which supplied aid to the Kadua region, left in



© Amnesty International



June (as did most international NGOs), after the fighting started. The supplies that remained in their storerooms were distributed by local organizations over 60 days. However, supplies have since dwindled and many families survive only on soup made from berries and leaves.

INTERNATIONAL INACTION

The conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile continues with no signs of any resolution, but the international community has done little to stop it.

On 15 August, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights released a report based on research carried out by human rights monitors of the UN Mission in Sudan before their mandate ended on 9 July. The report's findings include accounts of unlawful killings, mass destruction and looting of civilian property, which could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Shortly after the report was released, the UN Security Council met, but failed to condemn the indiscriminate bombings and other human rights violations, and the lack of access to aid agencies in Southern Kordofan. Following this, in September, during the UN Human Rights Council

Above: Eight-year-old Marcela Teimas Suleiman's foot was mutilated when a Sudanese Armed Forces bomb hit her village of Kurchi, Southern Kordofan, on 26 June. Her two younger sisters, Makalina, aged 4, and Breskela, aged 3, were killed in the attack along with 11 other civilians, most of whom were children and women.

session on Sudan, the international community failed to take a stand and call for independent human rights monitors in both Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Until action is taken, civilians will continue to bear the brunt of the conflict.

ACT NOW

Ask your Minister of Foreign Affairs to call on the UN Security Council to condemn and demand an end to the indiscriminate bombings and other violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile by the Sudanese government.

Ask the Minister to call for unhindered access for aid agencies so that they can assist the civilian population and to call for independent human rights monitoring across Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.





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BACKGROUND

Sudan is a country with a turbulent past. Since it gained independence in 1956 it has been plagued by years of internal armed conflicts, including a war between the south's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the government which spanned 22 years.

The conflict between northern and southern Sudan ended in 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and former southern opposition group, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). As part of the CPA, the people of southern Sudan voted on a referendum on 9 January 2011 to decide whether their region would secede from Sudan. They voted with a resounding yes – and South Sudan became the world's youngest nation on 9 July 2011.

The referendum and creation of an independent state went relatively smoothly, yet the process created some problems, and left others unresolved. As one country, southern Sudan held most of the oil, but depended on northern Sudan to transport it. As two countries, they have not yet managed to negotiate an arrangement for profit sharing.

Neither have the two countries been able to resolve exactly where the border between them lies, leading to armed conflict in the Abyei region, which both sides claim belongs to them. Fighting in Abyei town in May 2011 led to the displacement of over 110,000 people to South Sudan.



© Carsten Stormer

Page 4: Displaced children shelter in caves at Labu in Southern Kordofan, August 2011. More than 200,000 people have been forced to flee their homes for fear of aerial bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Top: The Al-Sir family has been devastated by Sudanese Armed Forces bombing raids over their village, Um Sirdeeba. The children's mother, brother, sister, and cousin were all killed along with a visiting relative on 19 June 2011. Five other children from the family were injured in the attack.

Left: A burn victim of a bomb attack in the village of Dalami, Southern Kordofan, August 2011.

A MIGRANT'S JOURNEY

THREE AMNESTY CAMPAIGNERS EXPLAIN WHY WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

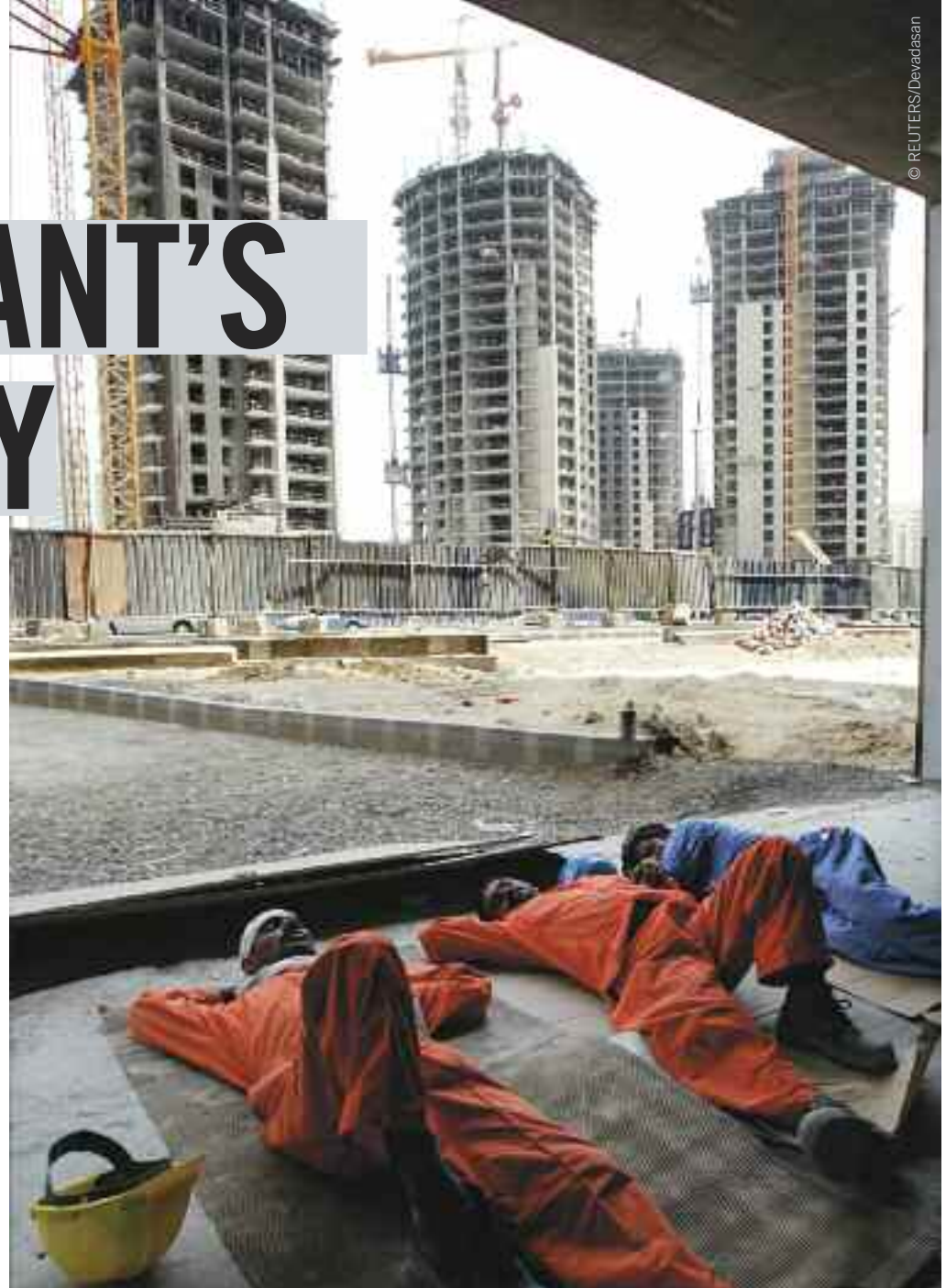
NEPALESE MIGRANT WORKERS EXPLOITED

Robert Godden

“I received my contract at the airport. It was in English so the broker verbally translated it for me. It said I would receive a salary of 1,250 Malaysian ringgit (US\$ 417) working eight hours per day plus overtime and receive free accommodation with one day off per week. In truth, my monthly salary was 450 ringgit (US\$150), working 12 to 16 hours per day without overtime or a rest day.”

T.P., December 2010

T.P.'s experience is not untypical of many Nepalese people who migrate abroad for work. Like him, most of the people we spoke to came from small rural villages. There are no factories. Jobs are scarce. In a decade, annual migration for work has risen from 55,000 to 300,000.



While an expanding recruitment industry has benefited from large profits, protection of migrant workers' rights remains poor. Government departments are poorly funded, centralized in the capital, Kathmandu, and weak at enforcing regulations. Systems of redress are difficult to access. The result is a recruitment industry acting with impunity.

Many prospective migrants believe agents when they promise high wages and good conditions in places like the Gulf States and Malaysia. So they take out large loans, averaging around US\$1,400, at high interest rates, to pay recruitment fees. Often, workers only discover the truth when they receive their first month's wages. By then it is too late – burdened with debt and their travel documents confiscated, it is difficult to back out.

Despite everything, T.P. says he would go abroad for work again. “To raise the funds to go the first time, I mortgaged my land at the bank at 12 per cent interest. I still haven't repaid the loan. I want to go abroad again because I need to make money for my family, my children's education.”

Many people in Kailali district in Nepal feel compelled to go despite the risks. It is time the government of Nepal enforced its own regulations to ensure migrant workers' rights are protected and complaints against recruiters properly investigated. Amnesty International will be pressing the authorities to ensure that the recruitment process is properly regulated so that people like T.P. can work abroad without fear of exploitation.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nepal-migrant-wrks>

TRAPPED IN DETENTION IN GREECE

Giorgos Kosmopoulos

“I was living [in Belgium] for many years but then I was sent back to Morocco. I am trying to get back there. My wife gave birth a few months ago and I haven't seen my baby yet. I don't know if I will make it; I am detained in this horrible place for some weeks already and they don't tell me what is going to happen to me.”

M.M., from Morocco, May 2011

In May 2011, we visited four detention centres on the border between Greece and Turkey. About 90 per cent of migrants and asylum-seekers entering Europe during 2010 crossed through Greece, an undeniable challenge for the authorities.

Entering these facilities was like stepping into another era. The dirty, overcrowded cells smelt so bad that guards wore surgical masks. In one cell in Tycherio, women and children had barely enough space to stretch their legs. Unaccompanied children shared a cell with the men and slept on the floor on flattened cardboard. Tycherio and Soufli detention centres had no courtyards for outdoor exercise.

Detainees told me they didn't always receive soap and other basics, that food was of poor quality and insufficient and that requests to see doctors were not always answered. “We have done nothing wrong”, they said. “Why are we imprisoned in such conditions?”

The unaccompanied minors were waiting for space to become available at the special reception centre. I met some who had been detained for up to two months. Their cell, in Fylakio, was dark, poorly ventilated and short of beds. The toilets overflowed and stank.

Such appalling conditions are a strong deterrent. If people apply for asylum, they risk having to remain in detention for up to six months. One Turkish man had already been held for 188 days. He and several others were on hunger strike against their prolonged detention. They said that they had fled their countries looking for refuge, solidarity and human rights: “Isn't that what Europe is all about?”

This kind of routine detention of asylum-seekers and irregular migrants must stop and no minors should be detained. We need to urge the Greek authorities to act immediately to bring detention conditions in line with international standards.

Help put pressure on the Greek authorities by signing a letter at <http://tinyurl.com/migrant-rights-greece>



© Giorgos Kosmopoulos

TERRORIZED IN MEXICO

Sarah Shebbeare

“I was the last one to be beaten, but they hit me really hard... I called out for God but they told me that they were God here... They beat an 18-year-old boy on the head. My sister-in-law is a nurse and knew first aid so we tried to resuscitate him but it was too late, we couldn't stop the bleeding. He died in our arms. I thought it was the last day of my life.”

Miguel Angel, September 2011

We met Honduran Miguel Angel and his sister-in-law Laura at a migrants' shelter in Mexico state. Miguel's description of being kidnapped by a criminal gang, just days earlier, shocked me.

But his experience is one shared by thousands of people who make the journey through Mexico every year in the hope of getting to the USA; experiences we have documented in the film *The Invisibles*, of migrants falling victim to beatings, abduction, rape and even murder.

Miguel and Laura managed to escape their kidnappers and reach a shelter where they were taken care of. A nurse volunteering there between shifts at the local hospital helped them recover. They were offered a bed, food and a new set of clothes.

It is largely thanks to this network of shelters providing humanitarian aid, and the efforts of the priests and lay workers who run them, that many more migrants do not succumb to exhaustion, abuse and starvation on their journey.

To my surprise, Miguel's experience had not

© Amnesty International (Photo: Ricardo Ramirez Arriola)



Left: Workers take a break at a construction site in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where temperatures often reach 45°C or higher. Many Nepalese migrant workers end up at sites such as this, having been promised other jobs.

Top: Asylum-seekers and migrants at Fylakio Detention Centre, Thrace, Evros, Greece, October 2010.

Above: A migrant with her son at the Hermanos en el Camino migrants' shelter, where they are given food and a bed before the next leg of their journey north. Oaxaca, Mexico, July 2011

put him off his dream of reaching the USA and finding work; he was planning to get on the next freight train heading north. Many more will follow him.

Show your solidarity for the shelters and the migrants who stay in them by packing a toothbrush, a bar of soap and a pair of socks in a jiffy bag and sending it to one of the first shelters on the migrants' route north in southern Mexico:

“La 72” Hogar Refugio para Personas Migrantes, Calle S/N, Colonia Estación Nueva Tenosique, Tabasco, Mexico.

Watch *The Invisibles* and take action at:

www.youtube.com/invisiblesfilms



IRREGULAR

MIGRANT

REGULARLY EXPLOITED, REGUL



STAND UP FOR THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS

www.amnesty.org/migrants

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



A still from *The Invisibles*, Amnesty International's film on the plight of migrants travelling through Mexico in hope of finding a better life in the USA, April 2010.

EARLY ABUSED, REGULARLY DENIED JUSTICE

50
YEARS



IRAN'S KILLING SPREE

DRUG OFFENDERS IN IRAN ARE BEING SECRETLY EXECUTED IN LARGE NUMBERS. THE AUTHORITIES CLAIM THIS DRAGONIAN PUNISHMENT WILL END THE DRUGS EPIDEMIC IN THE COUNTRY. BUT THEY ARE WRONG, SAYS INTERIM DEPUTY PROGRAMME DIRECTOR ANN HARRISON

Executions of alleged drugs offenders in Iran have skyrocketed since officials in the judiciary announced a crackdown on drug trafficking in October 2010. Arrests of drug traffickers have soared in recent years as Iranian drug seizures have risen, in part as a result of international assistance to try to stem the flow of narcotics from Afghanistan.

In a new report, *Addicted to death: executions in Iran for drugs offences*, Amnesty International has shown how many of those executed are killed in secret mass executions in some of the country's overcrowded prison facilities. Many have not received a fair trial — they have often been denied access to lawyers, and appear to have no right to appeal against their death sentences.

The authorities have never acknowledged the September 2011 execution of Haj Basir Ahmed, an Afghan national. “[He] phoned us from Tayebad prison in Iran to say that he was going to be executed in under two hours. As far as I know he never even appeared in court”, a relative of Haj Basir Ahmed said. “We couldn't get his body back, as the Iranians wanted 200 million rials payment, which we couldn't afford”.

DISADVANTAGED ARE MOST AT RISK

Those most at risk of execution for drug-related offences are often from the most disadvantaged sectors of society: members of ethnic minorities which suffer discrimination in law and practice in Iran, or foreign nationals who often come from countries where their economic opportunities are limited. Women sometimes resort to drug smuggling to feed their families, and some individuals may be duped into carrying drugs for others while the drugs barons often avoid arrest and prosecution.

Death row prisoner Yousef Islamdoust is a member of the Sunni Azerbaijani minority. “Although we had been told by the Judge that Yousef would be sentenced to six or seven months in prison, the Ministry of Intelligence asked for his execution”, Yousef's father, Mahmoud Islamdoust, says. “My son was tortured by Ministry of Intelligence [officials] for about 50 days.”

Iran continues to violate the international prohibition on the execution of juvenile offenders. Two juvenile offenders – Vahid Moslemi and Mohammad Nourouzi, both Afghan nationals – may have been among 22 individuals executed for drugs offences in Evin and Reja'i Shahr prisons on 18 September 2011. Amnesty International is aware of other juvenile offenders reported to be on death row, some of whom may have already been executed.

Twenty years ago, the authorities stepped up executions for alleged drugs offences in a “war on drugs”, aiming to eliminate drug trafficking from the country. But Iran still has an estimated two million or more addicts and users. Large quantities of Afghan opium are consumed in Iran – the world's largest market for opium – as well as other illegal drugs. It is also an important transit country for trafficking elsewhere, particularly towards Europe and, increasingly, Africa. In a new development, ever greater amounts of synthetic drugs such as metamphetamine (“crystal meth”) are being manufactured in Iran and trafficked abroad, mostly to Asian countries.

Iran's immense drug problem cannot be solved by a widespread application of the death penalty. There is no clear evidence that the death penalty has any identifiable effect in alleviating drug trafficking and abuse and even some officials doubt its efficacy. Despite the authorities' addiction to death as a cure-all solution for social ills, Iran's drug problem is continuing to grow.

ACT NOW

Call on Iran's Supreme Leader to commute all death sentences, including those passed for drug drug-related offences; order the review the Anti-Narcotics law to remove the mandatory death penalty for drugs offences; and ensure that no one arrested for alleged drugs offences is tortured or otherwise ill-treated and that all trials are conducted according to international fair trial standards. All defendants must be given every opportunity to defend themselves and the right to appeal their conviction and their sentence. You can also act online at www.amnesty.org/50/campaigns/death-penalty/iran

Please write to:

Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid Keshvar Doust Street,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

'THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE DOESN'T END WITH ME'

These were the words of Troy Davis, who was executed in the USA in September. **ROSEANN RIFE**, Head of Special Projects at Amnesty International, believes the legacy of the campaign to save Troy could help others on death row.



© Laurent HINI

Working for abolition of the death penalty is hard. It is an issue dealing in the most fundamental way with life, death and justice.

The numerous people who devote time to this effort often make strong and emotional connections with death row inmates and their families. After the execution of Troy Davis in Georgia, USA, on 21 September, activists grieved alongside his family and friends. It is difficult not to be discouraged when so much effort is still not enough to stop a state from killing.

Many of us have been asked since then how we feel about our failure to stop Troy's execution after years of campaigning. It is important to realize that, despite the tragic outcome, our efforts on his behalf had a huge impact.

Our members around the world participated in over 300 events or vigils that were held in the week preceding the execution. Troy made global headlines and exposed the cruellest deficiency of the death penalty – the fact that it is irrevocable. The enormous attention enabled abolition activists to re-engage with the media, governments and the public.

Many of our members have told us that people in their countries are questioning the death penalty because of the intense focus on this execution. This is a significant step forward towards abolition.

WORLDWIDE IMPACT

The doubts raised about Troy's conviction also gripped the attention of many people in Taiwan. It allowed activists to draw parallels with the case of Chiou Ho-shun. Like Troy, Chiou Ho-shun has

spent over two decades on death row and there are doubts about the case against him.

Chiou Ho-shun and his co-defendants say they were prevented from communicating with anyone for the first four months of their detention and were tortured into confessing to murder and kidnapping, which they later retracted. In 1994, after an official investigation, two public prosecutors and 10 police officers handling the case were convicted of extracting confessions through torture.

In Japan, international attention has also helped to further public debate. Hakamada Iwao was convicted for the murder of four people after an unfair trial and confessed after 20 days of interrogation by police without a lawyer present. He later retracted his confession and testified during his trial that police had beaten and threatened him. Hakamada Iwao is suffering from mental illness after almost 30 years in solitary confinement, and is at daily risk of being executed.

During this 50th anniversary year of Amnesty International, our members are also focusing on two cases of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, where foreign nationals are particularly vulnerable and frequently receive unfair trials. Suliamon Olyfemi, a Nigerian national, was sentenced to death for murder in 2004 after a trial conducted in Arabic, which he does not speak, and without access to a translator or a lawyer. Siti Zainab Binti Duhri Rupa reportedly confessed to the murder of her employer in 1999 while mentally ill and did not have any legal representation.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Activists often campaign for respect for international standards on the use of the death

Amnesty International activists from France with Troy Davis posters protest against the death penalty in the USA, July 2008.

penalty but it is the individual cases, the names and faces of those on death row, that grab the public's attention.

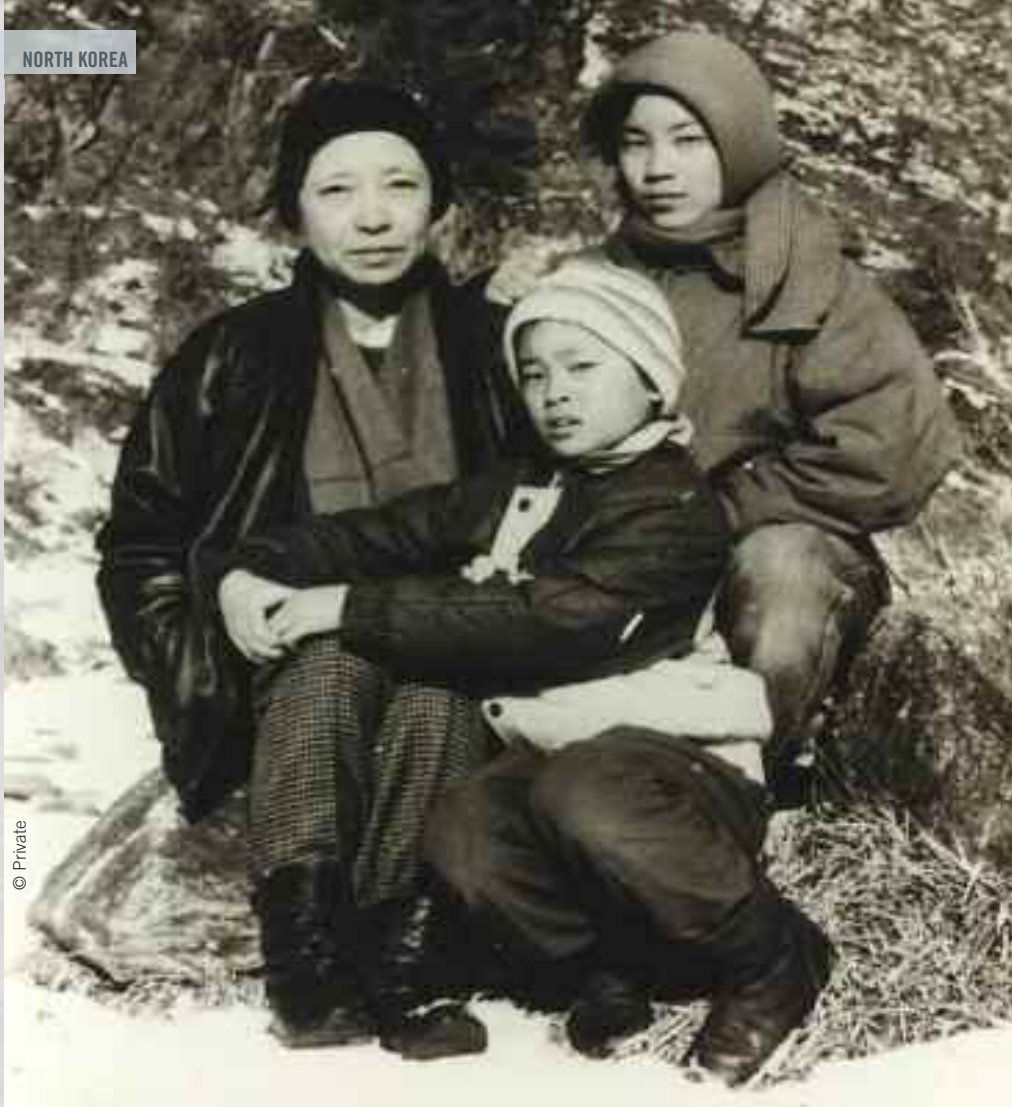
In countries with vigilant media and transparent legal systems, we are able to follow cases fairly closely and plan strategies. In the USA, India and Taiwan, we have worked with and for individual death row inmates for years, even decades.

But the unknown executed need to be remembered and counted as well. Many death penalty cases in North Korea, for example, never get reported in the news, do not have lawyers working on appeals and the executed are listed in our reports simply by numbers.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty for all crimes, in all cases, and in all countries. We continue to fight in the name of all individuals facing execution, even when we don't know their names.

Troy Davis knew this. Shortly before his death, he said "The struggle for justice doesn't end with me. This struggle is for all the Troy Davises who came before me and all the ones who will come after me."

All those people around the world who work for abolition should not only feel angry and grieve when a person is executed; they should also recognize that their efforts are having results. The global trend is demonstrably toward abolition and together we are powerful – and we will prevail.



© Private

Background: A satellite image of the Yodok Political Prison Camp 15 (PPC15) in central North Korea, taken on 07 April 2011. The image was commissioned by Amnesty International in order to lobby the North Korean government to close Yodok and other camps like it.

Left: Shin Sook-ja, with daughters Oh Hyewon and Oh Gyuwon. According to former inmates, this photo was taken at Yodok then sent to Shin Sook-ja's husband Oh Kil-nam in 1991. Read his testimony on the next page.

An estimated 50,000 men, women and children are currently held in Yodok political prison camp in North Korea. Most have been sent there without a trial. Why? Because they might have criticized the government or spoken to someone from South Korea. They may have watched a South Korean TV show or listened to South Korean radio. They may have been a government official who has fallen out of favour. Or they may be related to someone who has done any of the above.

Once in Yodok, they are forced into hard labour, brutalized and pushed to the limit – both mentally and physically. Some are born in Yodok, others die there. Only a few survive to tell their stories.

LIVING IN HELL

“ There was no trial. One day, the cell guards told me, ‘Get ready! You are going now.’ So, I obeyed him. I asked them where I was to go. They didn’t tell me. Then I was taken to Yodok.”

Former prisoner, 1994-97

“ I was hung by my arms for half an hour, then brought down and then taken back as many as five times a day. At other times, a black plastic bag was put on my head and then I was submerged in water for long periods at a time. For five months, I was tortured. In the end, I confessed to what they wanted me to confess.”

Lee, who was tortured for leaving North Korea without permission and sent to Yodok from 1997-2000

“ Not one day goes by when I [don’t] deeply regret the suffering I brought to my family who are languishing in North Korea. They have suffered so much for a crime they have not committed. I want to know where they are, what has happened to them, to hear from them. It is my dream that they are released and that we are reunited.”

Oh Kil-nam, who sought asylum in Denmark in 1986 after being sent to Germany by the North Korean authorities. His wife and two daughters (pictured left) were interned at Yodok in 1987. They are believed to be in the camp’s Total Control Zone, where they may remain for the rest of their lives. Oh Kil-nam now lives in Seoul.

“ We were not treated as human beings; we were forced into hard labour with tough targets which if not met meant punishment by restrictions of the already insufficient diet. If you fell sick, there were no meals as you did not produce any output. Given the crowded toilets, lack of time and pressure to meet work targets, we often urinated or defecated while working.”

Kim and Lee, former prisoners, 1997-2000

“ [T]he security officers kept sex slaves selected from the female inmates [who] received additional food and were assigned relatively easy work.”

Ahn, former prisoner, 1980-82

“ I saw three executions. Those executed included inmates who were caught escaping. All those who tried to escape were caught. They were interrogated for two to three months and then executed.”

Kim, former prisoner, 1997-2000

ACT NOW

Write to the North Korean authorities, calling on them to immediately close Yodok and release all prisoners of conscience held there. See: <http://sn.im/2labxx>

“ The children in my class were ordered to dig and move earth to a work site 200m away. But we were afraid that as we dug deeper, it could collapse at any time. The teachers who were supervising us told the children to keep digging. After three days, the hill suddenly collapsed. Three children were killed and the other three were badly injured. However, the teachers blamed the children for carelessness.”

Kang Cheol-hwan, former child prisoner, 1977-87

“ The term ‘political prisoner’ does not exist in DPRK’s [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea] vocabulary, and therefore the so-called political prisoners’ camps do not exist. There are reform institutions, which are called prisons in other countries. Those who are sentenced to the penalty of reform through labour for committing anti-State crimes or other crimes prescribed in the Criminal Law serve their terms at the reform institutions.”

North Korean response to the UN’s review of the country’s human rights record at the Human Rights Council, December 2009

50 YEARS

The Australian government is systematically stripping services from many communities in the Northern Territory, threatening Aboriginal Peoples' connection to their traditional homelands. Defending the homelands is central to the survival and dignity of communities at risk. Campaigner SARAH MARLAND, from Amnesty International in Australia, reports.

'THE LAND

Aboriginal Peoples have lived in Australia for millennia and are the world's longest-surviving continuous culture. Besides their own distinct laws and customs, they have a unique relationship with the land.

Alyawarr/Anmatyerr elder Rosalie Kunoth-Monks explains this beautifully:

"All of the components of our identity hang on the land. There's the land in a circle. There's the language from that land. In this region it's the Alyawarr and Anmatyerr language. It incorporates family lineage, family groups. It incorporates our sacred lands. It incorporates our law. The law is L-A-W as well as L-O-R-E. Break any one of those arms and sever it from the land, you are committing the death of a race of people."

Australia's federal and Northern Territory governments are now placing the future of traditional homelands in jeopardy. Government policies see homelands losing funding in favour of larger towns and being pushed to the bottom of the priority list for essential services such as health care, education, housing and infrastructure maintenance. This is forcing people to leave their homelands and move to larger towns to get access to basic services.

© Rusty Stewart 2007



"My paintings are 'maps' of our country. I cannot paint when I'm not on my land. My art exists because of my connection to my homelands.

I would like my grandchildren to have the chance to live on their country, to know the stories."

Kathleen Ngal (pictured above), Anmatyerr elder and renowned artist, Camel Camp, Utopia homelands

The governments are also taking decisions that affect communities without consulting them and without their free, prior and informed consent. This results in policies that effectively discriminate against Aboriginal Peoples on the basis of their culture and where they live.

REPEATING PAST MISTAKES

Decades of Australian government policy in the last century saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples forced off their traditional lands and into missions, towns and cities – a process referred to as "assimilation".

© Amnesty International/Chloe Geraghty



Utopia homelands residents Jellalonia Jones, Rianna Ross and Christalin Jones.

In the 1960s, small groups of Aboriginal people, usually families or other closely related people, began relocating back their traditional lands and waters and establishing communities there. This became known as the homelands movement. Today, one third of Aboriginal Peoples in the Northern Territory live on approximately 500 homelands.

Studies show that there are proven benefits to living on traditional homelands. The Alyawarr and Anmatyerr Peoples of the Utopia homelands are based 260km north-east of Alice

HOLDS US'



© Amnesty International/April Pyle



“I live here, I grew up here: this is my country. This is a special place, I don't want to go to no other place, I love my country, it's where

I'm gonna stay forever. It's all family sitting down here. This is one country, one family.

Motorbike Paddy Petyarr, Anmatyerr elder and kwertengel “manager” of his country, Utopia Homelands.

Springs in the Northern Territory. Utopia is home to roughly 1,400 people living in 16 dispersed communities several hundred kilometres apart. Studies have shown that people in Utopia are healthier, happier and live longer.

The evidence is particularly strong and growing in relation to health, showing that Aboriginal Peoples living in homeland communities were far healthier than those living in large towns. Raising families on homelands means that people maintain their spiritual and economic connections to their country and have some measure of community control and agency.

For these communities, current government policies may herald a return to the assimilation era.

Learning from the past, and given its obligations under international law, the Australian government should be encouraging, rather than undermining, traditional homelands.

For three years, Amnesty International has been researching human rights violations by the Australian and Northern Territory governments against Aboriginal communities, including breaches of the fundamental right of Indigenous Peoples to their traditional lands. In August 2011, we published the report *The land holds us: Aboriginal Peoples' right to traditional homelands in the Northern Territory*, available at www.amnesty.org.au/indigenous-rights/comments/26216

“I learned bush medicine from my grandparents. In order to keep making and using bush medicine, I need to live on my homelands.

We know people here are healthier than other people. We live longer, have less heart problems, less diabetes, better diet, more exercise.

If people have to move into town, we lose our medicine. Then how will little kids know?”

Joycie Jones Petyarr, health worker, Utopia homelands

© Lucas Jordan/Amnesty International



Background: The Red road from Alice Springs to Utopia Homelands, Northern Territory, Australia. **Above:** Women's camp at Rocket Range, Northern Territory.

© Sarah Marland/Amnesty International

ACT NOW

Send a message of support to the Alyawarr and Anmatyerr Peoples of the Utopia homelands, by filling in and sending the card in the insert. Your support will let the government know that people from across the world believe the Australian government should not abandon the homelands.

RESISTING THE REIGN OF TERROR

The Lord's Resistance Army is terrorizing civilians in Central African Republic. Its members kill in cold blood, force children to become soldiers, rape women and girls and have forced thousands out of their villages. Human rights defender LEWIS-ALEXIS MBOLINANI tells Amnesty researcher Godfrey Byaruhanga how civil society can help to alleviate this desperate situation.

“In the south-east of the country, nearly everyone is a victim of the LRA [Lord's Resistance Army]”, says Lewis-Alexis Mbolinani (pictured top left wearing tie). “When they attack, they set fire to houses and granaries. They kill and abduct people. All kinds of humiliations are going on. People are experiencing enormous violence.”

The human rights situation in Central African Republic (CAR) is dire. Ravaged by a conflict involving a myriad of groups, it is a volatile and unstable country. Innumerable human rights abuses continue to be committed by the various parties in the conflict-ridden country. The civilian population bears the brunt of the abuses. Tens of thousands of Central Africans have been forced to

flee to neighbouring countries, and several hundred thousand civilians are internally displaced in the CAR.

The LRA has caused the most distress in eastern CAR since early 2008. The group has launched incursions into eastern CAR, mostly from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and sometimes from South Sudan. The LRA has no clear agenda. “A rebel force normally has specific objectives and seeks to secure power”, says

Lewis-Alexis. “What are the LRA's objectives? They say that they are a liberation army sent by God; but who is this God that just kills? It's a whole phenomenon of destruction, of the extermination of peoples”.
In July 2010, Amnesty international researchers met and interviewed scores of victims of LRA abuses, including those who have been abducted and taken to LRA camps. The victims told of mutilation, cruel treatment, torture, including rape, sexual slavery, pillaging, intentional direct attack on civilians and forcibly recruiting children to fight as soldiers.



Victims of human rights abuse in Central African Republic.
Images © Amnesty International

A REGION-WIDE PROBLEM

Lewis-Alexis believes that civil society can help deal with the consequences of LRA violence. “Civil society has helped the authorities and the international community to understand the situation better. UNHCR [the UN Refugee agency] works to protect refugees and displaced people. UNICEF is down here too; we have international NGOs operating there now and the UNHAS [UN Humanitarian Air Services] humanitarian flights are providing a truly remarkable service. There is therefore a strong need for civil society capacity-building, especially in relation to conflict prevention and the protection of civilians.”

Protecting civilians, Lewis-Alexis says, is a priority. “We call on the European Union, the African Union and governments who are listening to help set up a system, a strong mechanism to

ensure co-ordination and safety of the civilians population.”

His public criticism of the CAR government failure to protect civilians has been received with hostility and Lewis-Alexis was arrested in December 2009 and accused of being an LRA agent. The case was dropped in September 2010.

What about the future? Lewis-Alexis believes in a holistic approach to resisting the LRA. “The LRA is a regional problem which can no longer be solved as separate Ugandan, Sudanese, Central African or Congolese issues”, he says. “It has to be addressed in a co-ordinated manner. When representatives of civil society get together, we share our knowledge: what have they been doing in the CAR? What have they been doing in Sudan? What can we do while we wait for the government or the international community or the local authorities to arrive?”

“Our prayer today is for the LRA to leave our country. We want peace, simply peace.”

The report *Central African Republic: action needed to end decades of abuse* is available at <http://tinyurl.com/CAR-report>

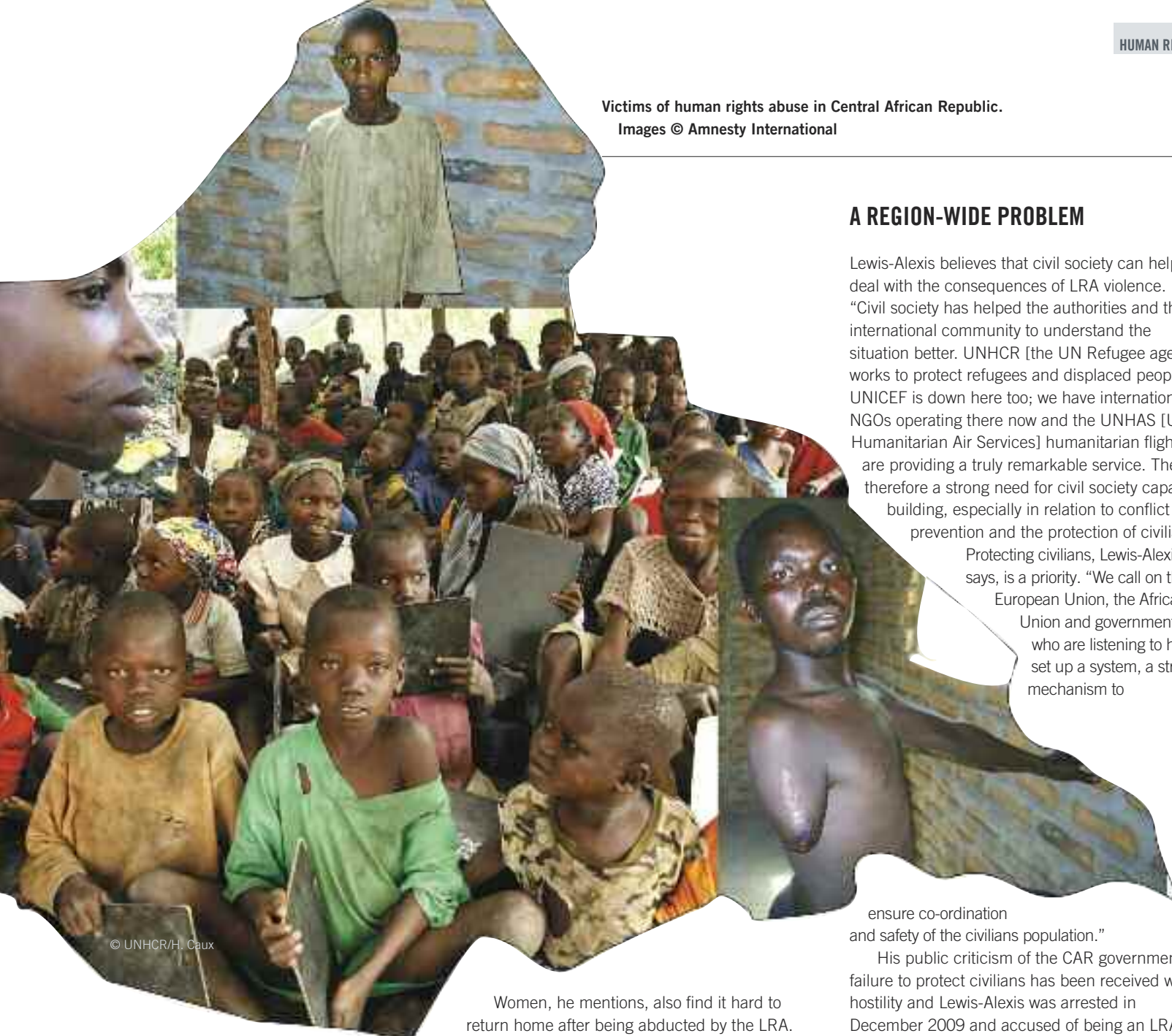
SUPPORTING VICTIMS

Human rights defender Lewis-Alexis is Co-ordinator of Youth United for Environmental Protection and Community Development (JUPEDEC). The NGO promotes health and education in southeastern CAR and helps villagers build health centres, classrooms and bridges and establish income-generating initiatives.

JUPEDEC also develops programmes to support child soldiers who return from LRA camps. “The children are indoctrinated to go out into their own villages to carry out massacres, kill their own parents and kill villagers”, Lewis-Alexis explains. “They feel guilty. We raise awareness of the predicament of child soldiers, so that when they return and give themselves up, they will be welcomed”.

Women, he mentions, also find it hard to return home after being abducted by the LRA. “Women are raped by LRA members and become pregnant. When they return, they are completely rejected. These women and young boys, who have spent months or years with the LRA in the bush come back traumatized and very probably infected with HIV or have AIDS.

JUPEDEC also helps those who have been internally displaced. “People have been forced to abandon their villages because of the massacres. In the south-east, we now have at least 28,000 displaced people. They are confined to the urban centres. Where are they going to find food? Lack of access to land to grow crops is a serious problem. The international community distributes food but the people who have been displaced cannot grow anything.” JUPEDEC helps them secure seeds and tools to grow their own food.



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WORLDWIDE APPEALS UPDATES

MYANMAR PRISONERS RELEASED



© AAPB



© www.dvb.no



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In October we celebrated the release of prisoners of conscience Zarganar (pictured top left), Su Su Nway (below left) and Zaw Htet Ko Ko (bottom left). The three were among at least 240 political prisoners released in a mass amnesty in Myanmar. WIRE readers campaigned for the release of Zarganar and Su Su Nway when their cases featured as Worldwide Appeals in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

However, the releases so far are not enough. "There are many [political] prisoners left in the prisons, including ill people and the aged and hospitalized", said Su Su Nway. "All political prisoners deserve to be free."

Freed comedian and activist Zarganar said: "Getting all political prisoners released... is my number one priority."

Amnesty International's researcher on Myanmar, Benjamin Zawacki, stated: "If Myanmar's authorities are serious about demonstrating their commitment to reform, this must be only the first step towards a release of all political prisoners as soon as possible." A petition of 30,750 signatures from residents in

77 countries, calling for the release of all prisoners of conscience, was delivered to Myanmar authorities by Amnesty International on 11 November 2011. We continue to monitor the situation.



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Switzerland



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Australia



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South Korea



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Switzerland

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Bangladesh

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UK

Thousands of supporters and activists around the world took to the streets during 2011 in solidarity with the people of the Middle East and North Africa calling for political and social change in the region. Global Days of Action for Egypt, Syria and Libya took place in the UK, Switzerland, Bangladesh, Australia, South Korea and the USA.

To find out about planned activities for 2012 follow @Amnestyonline on twitter.



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USA

WHETHER IN A HIGH-PROFILE CONFLICT OR A FORGOTTEN CORNER OF THE GLOBE, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DIGNITY FOR ALL AND SEEKS TO GALVANIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD

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**‘WE WANT PEACE.
SIMPLY PEACE.’**

**HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER LEWIS-ALEXIS MBOLINANI
OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (PAGE 18)**

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