

FLAME

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND'S SUPPORTER MAGAZINE



ISSUE 4 / 2011

SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC



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GUEST EDITORIAL



HELEN SHORTHOUSE
CHAIR
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AOTEAROA NZ

As I consider what to write for my first editorial for Flame, I reflect on the intensely busy few months we have had. To start however, I would like to recognise and thank Diana Pickard, our outgoing Chair for the hard work and dedication she has given to AIANZ in this role. Thanks also to Terry O'Neill for his valued contribution as a member of the Governance Team (GT).

In June the Movement held its International Council Meeting (ICM), which meets to agree strategy and direction. There was some pain as we grappled with challenges in governance and accountability and sought agreement on the way ahead. More details of the ICM and decisions taken can be found on the AIANZ website. For me, it was incredible to see the movement operating in an inspiring democratic way and also a great opportunity to network with others across the globe and remind myself what a inspiring organisation Amnesty is. Both fellow attendees and guest speakers spoke of the human rights challenges they have faced, of how important Amnesty is to them and the strength we bring as a global movement of three million plus members.

There has been much talk about the future structure of Amnesty globally. An exciting development is the implementation of a regional hub system, pushing decision making and research teams closer to where the human rights issues are. This also links with the understanding that if we are to grow globally, we need to attract members and activists from other countries throughout

the world – including South America, Asia, Africa and Russia. We will keep you posted as details unfold, but the Governance Team (GT) feels that this is a very positive move for the movement and for AIANZ.

Globally the strategic direction has been set through to 2015 in the Global Priority Statement 2 (GPS2) and the 12 Critical Pathways. The GT is shortly to review the NZ strategy and priorities in line with these documents. Thank you to all of you who took the time to respond to our survey asking for feedback into this; it is important to us and we will be reflecting on your views when we meet.

Finally, we were pleased to welcome Amnesty's Secretary General, Salil Shetty for a visit in October. Patrick, our CEO, and his team arranged a fantastic agenda, making the most of the opportunity to raise Amnesty's profile and to showcase the good work we do here. Salil had a number of public and private speaking engagements, meetings and talked with an impressive number of press outlets. We also took the opportunity to provide Salil with a rundown on the human rights issues in the Pacific region, which he welcomed.

We are now halfway through our 50th birthday year. This is not only a time to reflect, but also to look forward. Amnesty's founder, Peter Benenson, once said that only when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed, when the last torture chamber has been closed and when the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a reality for the world's people, will our work be done.

Enjoy reading this edition of Flame and, in particular, I encourage you to reflect on what you can personally do to ensure our movement grows and remains strong to allow us to do the human rights work that we still have to do.

Helen Shorthouse
Chair
Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ.

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COVER PHOTO: Amnesty International staff visited Port Vila in Vanuatu in August 2010 to research the human rights impact of informal settlements and slums in the Pacific region. The women pictured, who live in these informal settlements, spoke to AI staff about their experiences. © Josephine Latu, Amnesty International

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IN OUR 50TH YEAR



Be one more

We're halfway through our birthday celebrations, six months have flown by and we have seen people all over the country Toast to Freedom in the name of Amnesty International.

But the celebrations don't stop here. There are six months to go, plenty still to celebrate and many more chances to BE ONE MORE, ASK ONE MORE AND ACT ONE MORE.

In the 50 years since Amnesty's inception, we have grown to be an organisation of three million plus supporters, activists and volunteers.

But imagine the strength of our voice if every one of those three million people inspires just one more person to take action and join Amnesty International.

Think of all the Zarganars that could be released, the human rights abusers who could be brought to justice, the lives saved by the implementation of an effective Arms Trade Treaty.

Introduce us to your friends by gifting them an Amnesty membership for Christmas or inviting them to Amnesty events in your region. Consider hosting your own AmnesTEA party, Toast to Freedom or Letterwriting event. We can provide you with resources and you'll find more ideas about saving lives with the power of the pen on Page 9.

Email webmaster@amnesty.org.nz to be added to our monthly e-campaigning Digest, 'ACTivist!'

Key AI@50 Dates for your Calendar

3 - 17 December:

Write for Rights Global Letterwriting Marathon

10 December:

International Human Rights Day

12 February 2012:

10th anniversary of the signing of the Optional Protocol on Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

10 - March:

Pasifika Festival, Auckland

16, 17, and 18 March:

WOMAD festival, New Plymouth

12 May:

AIANZ Annual Meeting - and Human Rights Defenders Award

13 May:

Regional Training Day

28 May:

The culmination of our birthday year, celebrating our successes with a Toast to Freedom

TOP: The Tauranga Moana Group at their monthly Toasts to Freedom to mark AI's 50th birthday.

TOP RIGHT: Joseph North was not the only person smiling at the Remuera Groups' Spring Plant Sale which raised in excess of \$3,000 for Amnesty's campaigning work.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Members of the Auckland University Group protest disappearances and unfair detentions during the campus' Human Rights Week.

BOTTOM RIGHT Salil Shetty Public Speaking Engagement Auckland.



Salil Shetty in NZ

"New Zealand is a country that is a champion in human rights."

In early October, Amnesty International's Secretary General Salil Shetty made a flying visit to New Zealand as part of the organisation's 50th birthday.

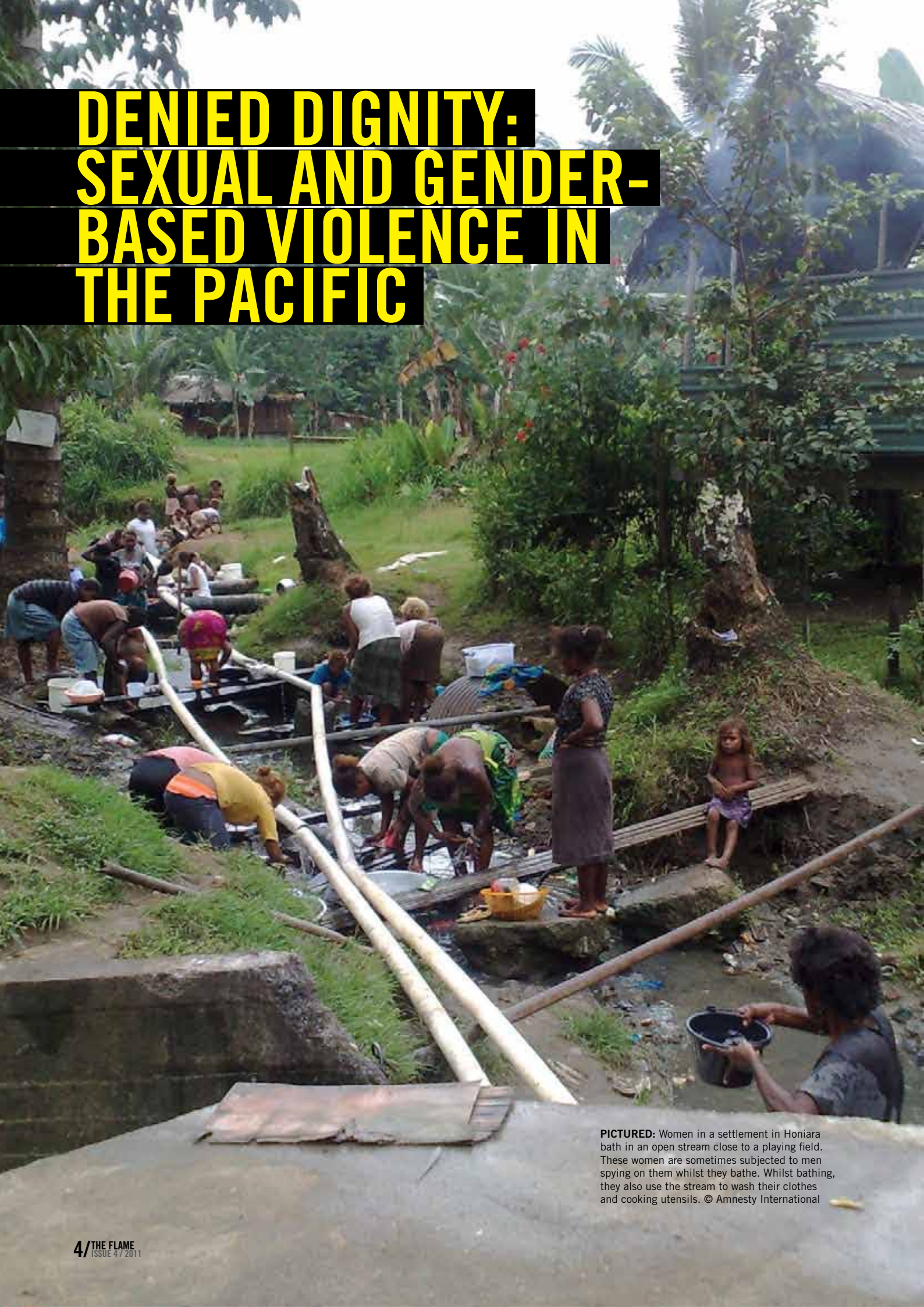
The visit was a key opportunity to highlight our activities in New Zealand and put our work on the global map.

While in the country Salil met with key parliamentary figures to ensure the human rights situation in this country and the Pacific is at the forefront of the general election agenda.

While Salil strongly recognised the role NZ has played in the protection of human rights worldwide he urged us not to become complacent but to use our position to challenge governments to do champion human rights.

"Be a voice for those who have none," Salil said.

DENIED DIGNITY: SEXUAL AND GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE IN THE PACIFIC



PICTURED: Women in a settlement in Honiara bath in an open stream close to a playing field. These women are sometimes subjected to men spying on them whilst they bathe. Whilst bathing, they also use the stream to wash their clothes and cooking utensils. © Amnesty International

“...They came and one of them grabbed my arm and one closed his hand over my mouth. They held me down and took my clothes off and raped me. They were very violent and I had bruises all over my body. I wanted to die desperately and I was crying and crying thinking of my children...” - A 37 year-old woman who lives in Mamanawata settlement, Solomon Islands.

Violence against women in the Solomon Islands is widespread. A 2009 survey conducted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the government revealed that 64 per cent of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partners and other family members.

“These figures are too much for our small country,” said Jocelyn Lai of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in the Solomon Islands.

Speaking at the launch of Amnesty International’s report *Where is the dignity in that? Women in Solomon Islands Slums Denied Sanitation and Safety*, during the 2011 Pacific Island Forum Leaders’ Meeting in Auckland (PIF) Jocelyn said that rape cases in the Solomon Islands are an everyday reality.

“This is not good enough,” she said.

From Munda in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands Jocelyn has a long history of coordinating programmes and activities with the YWCA. She was Amnesty International’s guest during PIF in Auckland in September.

“*Where is the Dignity in that*” details the impact of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the Solomon Islands, an issue made worse when women live in informal settlements where there is a lack of clean water and adequate sanitation.

Jocelyn said that disrespect for cultural values; uncontrolled sexual behaviour and total ignorance are just some of the root causes of an issue that is entrenched, systematic and widespread not only in the Solomon Islands but the whole Pacific region; impacting on average two out of every three women.

The PNG Law Reform Commission reported that 67 per cent of wives in Papua New Guinea have been beaten by their husbands. In Kiribati the Secretariat of the Pacific Community said that 68 per cent of respondents had been subject to sexual and/or physical violence

and according to the Tonga Police since 2000, 2753 women were victims of physical abuse.

The figures are high, and while Amnesty International welcomed the commitment by PIF leaders to address gender equality and SGBV, its over-arching commitment to the theme of this year’s PIF Leaders’ Meeting of sustainable economic development will be limited, until such time as Pacific leaders fully recognise the rights of their women.

Excluding Vanuatu and Fiji no PIF country has specific legislation in place to address SGBV.

It’s why the organisation has called on Pacific Leaders to “Change the Lights on Women’s Rights”.

This is a call reiterated by Jocelyn who said that, “only when all Pacific governments are serious about this issue by bringing on change will we have a safe Pacific.”

It is an issue of concern to the New Zealand public, 21,000 of who signed an Amnesty petition calling on Pacific leaders to take action on SGBV in the region.

AIANZ’s Chief Executive, Patrick Holmes, was able to proudly hand over the petition to Kiribati leader, Anote Tong, who accepted it on behalf of his country, on September 8.

New Zealand has a huge role to play. A role that according to Jocelyn could be in the form of providing human resources, funding and monitoring capacity to assist the progress of programmes carried out in Pacific countries.

There is still a long way to go.

As Jocelyn said; “SGBV is such a big issue in the Pacific, yet no government has an agenda to include this in the education curriculum”.

“Not everyone in the rural communities of Solomon Islands even understands the meaning of the words ‘human rights’”.

Jocelyn believes that the PIF meeting is the perfect opportunity to exchange and share information and ideas affecting Pacific countries. And, as the only bridge linking each leader, it is a chance to see where priorities lie.

Yet, for the future, and perhaps in time for next year’s PIF, Jocelyn hopes to see improved statistics on SGBV, actions taken and “progress extended to even the smallest voice out there.”

For more information on PIF, SGBV and to read Amnesty’s report on the Solomon Islands visit: <http://bit.ly/npPxmm>

Torture, a report and more questions than answers

The issue of whether New Zealand SAS troops were handing detainees over to the risk of torture in Afghan detention centres has been a hot topic over the past few months.

Torture is never justified; no matter where, when or why it happens, or who it happens to.

Yet a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan report released on 10 October explicitly states that torture and mistreatment of detainees, including children, in Afghan detention facilities is occurring.

These claims are not new; they simply reiterate the finding of past investigations, including those by Amnesty International.

AIANZ has consistently called on the Minister of Defence, Hon Dr Wayne Mapp to answer the question of whether New Zealand has been complicit in torture. And after 14 months of waiting, in mid October the Minister did finally release his internal report.

While the report, prepared by the Chief of the NZDF Lieutenant General Rhys Jones, argues that the SAS has not been complicit in torture, it leaves crucial questions unanswered.

The Minister of Defence has said he has had “no reports” that any of the detainees the Afghan National Police Crisis Response Unit captured on 58 occasions while working with the NZSAS detainees have been tortured. Yet they are not being monitored and the NZDF has no intention to monitor their well-being.

AIANZ will continue to seek an independent investigation so as to provide transparency and accountability over NZ’s compliance with our international human rights and humanitarian law obligations.

SHELL: OWN UP CLEAN UP AND PAY UP



A fault in the Trans-Niger pipeline caused a major oil spill in Bodo, Ogoniland, Nigeria on 28 August 2008. The oil poured into the swamp for at least four weeks – possibly for as long as 10. Shell recorded that 1,640 barrels of oil were spilt; however, an independent estimate suggests that as much as 4,000 barrels a day were leaking from the pipe.

Three months later, a second spill occurred in Bodo, a town of some 69,000 people, also due to equipment failure. This spill was reported to Shell on 9 December, who took 10 weeks to stop it.

Three years on, the area has not yet been cleaned up.

Earlier this month, Amnesty International and the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development released a report, *The true tragedy: delays and failures in tackling oil spills in the Niger Delta*, which documents the crippling human rights impact of these two oil spills.

Damage to fisheries and farmland has resulted in food shortages and higher prices in Bodo. Residents have said that they struggle to make a living and have serious health concerns because of the pollution. Alternative jobs are not easy to find and many young people have been forced to look for work in Port Harcourt, the state capital, 50km away. One fisherman from Bodo, said: “Before the spill, life was easy. The people could live from the catch of fish...After the spill, everything was destroyed.”

The world was alerted to the devastating impact of the oil industry in the Niger Delta 16 years ago, when environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa was hung, along with eight other members of the Ogoni people by the Nigerian State. It was 10 November 1995 and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was taking place in Auckland. Amnesty’s report release date commemorated those executions.

While there may have been a change of branding and ownership, fuel retailer Z Energy, formerly Shell New Zealand, still buys its oil from Shell. When you look at who owns Z Energy, Nigeria’s human rights abuses all of a sudden get far too close for comfort: Z Energy is partly owned by the New Zealand Superannuation Fund. New Zealanders are retiring on the profits of human rights violations.

NZ is home to the first, and so far only, environmental network within Amnesty International. The Environmental Defenders Network, or EDeN, has been campaigning for Shell to come clean over its abuses in Nigeria since Amnesty issued its first report on the situation in 2009.

Shell, which reported profits of US\$ 7.2 billion between July and September this year, initially offered the Bodo community 50 bags of rice, beans, sugar and tomatoes as relief for the disaster. To add insult to injury, Shell’s Chief Executive Officer, Peter Voser, earned 5.361 million last year alone.

The UN Environment Programme recently found that oil pollution over

many years had resulted in such devastation that it would take more than 25 years for Ogoniland to recover. The UN recommended setting up an Environmental Restoration Fund with an initial amount of US\$1 billion, with further funding to follow.

Given the role Shell has played in profiting from this devastation, Amnesty is calling on the company to commit to pay an initial US \$1 billion to begin the cleanup effort, a fraction of the more than US \$20 billion Shell earned last year.

The facts are simple. Two spills, both of them Shell’s fault, both left to flow for weeks, and neither cleaned up after three years. By any standard, this is a catastrophic corporate failure with horrific human consequences.

Read the full report online at www.amnesty.org.nz and Take Action by joining EDeN at <http://bit.ly/vAlt7I>

ABOVE: Sivibilagbara swamp, Bodo, Nigeria, May 2011. © Amnesty International hand -

BELOW: Oily mud, Bodo Creek, Nigeria, January 2011. © Amnesty International



POWER OF THE PEN



PICTURED: Write-a-thon. Dolores Flynn-Edge and her letterwriting companions with pens poised.

Every Friday Mona Hamilton sits down, picks up her pen and starts writing.

Sometimes on her own, often with at least three other people and sometimes in a group, she writes letters to people who have been imprisoned for simply speaking their mind, people who have been tortured, people who are far removed from her home in Tauranga, New Zealand. People who have no voice of their own.

She writes 12 letters every Friday and has done so for the past 20 years. That adds up to hundreds of letters each year, around 12,500 letters that have helped brighten the prison cells of many prisoners of conscience and sent a shiver down the spine of government officials and prison guards.

"It's very important that these people who are in prison have someone to speak for them, as they have no voice," Mona said.

"It's about justice really."

Twenty years ago Mona accepted an invitation from a friend, Gary Ware, to attend an Amnesty International evening where an ex prisoner of conscience from Europe was speaking. This person had been imprisoned, abused and tortured.

Mona couldn't just ignore what she had heard.

"I think if we know about it, well, there's no good in knowing if we don't do something," she said.

Now 88 years old she said she feels bound to continue to write.

"Once I've started writing for a particular person, I have to keep going."

"And I feel that persistent writing really does make a difference."

Mona and her writing group send letters to embassies, government officials, prison

officials and of course to the prisoners themselves – messages of solidarity.

Often they do receive letters back and this, Mona said, is what makes it all worthwhile.

"The most memorable cases of course are the successful ones, it's a great feeling getting a letter from someone you know you've helped, and you feel regarded because of course we do it in the best of faith."

Amnesty International began with the written word, when British lawyer Peter Benenson put pen to paper after being outraged that two Portuguese students were sentenced to seven years in prison for raising their glasses in a toast to freedom.

Yet that was in 1961, and today there's Facebook and Twitter, information is instantly at our fingertips. According to online statistics around, 200 million tweets are sent each day, immediately arriving to recipients. So how relevant is the old fashioned communication of a letter?

Dolores Flynn-Edge answered that question - "a letter gets to the person, we know we're getting through to them, it's not something that can be simply deleted or lost in cyberspace."

Dolores is the joint coordinator of Amnesty International's Tauranga Moana group and said, for her, letters are more heart to heart.

"We read about these cases, look at their pictures and we look them in the eye before we pick up the pen and write to them. It's about sending a message of solidarity and, particularly with Christmas coming, it's about sending a simple greeting."

As Jack Mapanje, who was detained by the Malawian authorities from 1987 to 1991 for writing poetry critical of his government said "This, in Mikuyu prison, this, in any prison, a postcard

"FIVE MINUTES OF THEIR TIME, GAVE ME THE ENERGY TO SURVIVE TWO YEARS OF UNLAWFUL IMPRISONMENT."

Chekib El-Khiari

Human Rights Defender and political prisoner in Morocco was released on 21 April this year.

of prettiness is a sign of hope." Jack was released following intense public pressure from around the world.

It's also about getting noticed, letting people know there is someone out there watching them, paying attention.

For Dolores, her most memorable case is that of Aung San Suu Kyi, one of the world's best-known prisoner of conscience. She walked free in 2010 after spending 15 of the past 21 years unjustly under house arrest.

"Her release was fantastic and just showed that it was important to keep writing. We didn't give up on her, for all those years," Dolores said.

The Tauranga Moana group will be taking part in this year's Write for Rights Global Letterwriting Marathon. They will set up in Red Square outside a cafe and write, and write, and write.

For more information on the LWM see details on page 9.

WORLDWIDE CALLS FOR ACTION



INDONESIA

15 years for peaceful protester

Filep Karma is currently serving a 15 year prison sentence after taking part in a peaceful ceremony in December 2004 in Abepura, Papua Province. He raised the 'Morning Star' flag, a banned symbol and was arrested at the site of the ceremony, beaten on the way to the police station, and charged with rebellion.

Amnesty International takes no position on the political status of any province in Indonesia but the organisation does consider Filep Karma to be a prisoner of conscience.

At least 70 people are currently in prison in Indonesia for carrying out peaceful activities.

Filep Karma has staged various protests while in detention, especially about his ill-health, the ill treatment of other prisoners and about the legality of the charges laid against him.

Prisons do not meet the UN standard of Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Specific health concerns include overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of food and insufficient medical care in police custody.

PICTURED: Filep Karma © Solidaritas Korban Pelanggaran HAM Papua (SKPHPP)



NORTH KOREA

North Korea denies camp existence

An estimated 50,000 political prisoners and their families are imprisoned in Yodok prison camp without trial or following unfair trials. Yodok is one of six known camps in the country, in which an estimated 200,000 political prisoners and their families are imprisoned without trial or following grossly unfair trials. Inmates, including children, are tortured and forced to work in dangerous conditions. The North Korean government denies the existence of any political prison camps, despite evidence from satellite photographs and testimonies of former inmates and guards collected by Amnesty International.

Political Prisons have 'total control zones' from which inmates are never released except in very rare circumstances or if they manage to escape. Infants born in total control zones are imprisoned for life. Prisoners include officials perceived to have performed their job inadequately, critics of the North Korean government and people suspected of engaging in anti-government activities including TV or radio broadcasts from South Korea.

The system of guilt by association is used to silence many and control the population through fear, as family members of those suspected of crimes are also sent to Yodok. North Korean national Oh Kil-man's wife and two daughters were sent to Yodok because he requested political asylum in Denmark and failed to return to North Korea.

Men, women and children in these camps are tortured and otherwise ill-treated, including being forced to work in dangerous conditions. Executions are also carried out both publicly and privately in Yodok. Inmates can be executed for things such as breaking prison camp rules or stealing food.

Support our appeal by donating online at www.amnesty.org.nz

PICTURED: The Oh Family in Yodok Political Prison Camp © Private

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Filep Karma and all other prisoners of conscience in Indonesia. Urging that Filep Karma has access to medical treatment if he requires it, lawyers of his own choosing and visits from family members while he remains in prison.

SEND APPEALS TO:
 Patrialis Akbar
 Minister of Justice and Human Rights
 Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Kav No 4-5 Kuningan
 Jakarta Selatan 12950
 Indonesia

FAX: +62 21 525 3095

SALUTATION: Dear Minister

Send a message of support to Filep Karma

Letters and cards can be sent in solidarity, please do not mention Amnesty International in your letters. You may wish to begin your message with "Salam hangat dari"...which means "Greeting from..."

SEND TO:
 Filep Karma
 Melalui Cyntia Warwe
 Kontras Papua
 Jl. Raya Sentani No. 67 B.
 Depan Ojek Padang Bulan
 Jayapura, Papua
 Indonesia

TAKE ACTION

Please write, to the North Korean authorities calling on them to immediately close Yodok and all political camps, and immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience held within them. Call on them to also end all executions and abusive forced labour, torture and other ill-treatment of detainees.

SEND APPEALS TO:

Kim Jong-il
 Chairman, National Defence Commission
 Pyongyang
 Democratic People's Republic of Korea



Intolerance of peaceful public demonstrations

Members of the women's rights organisation Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) have been repeatedly arrested and detained in appalling conditions for taking part in peaceful demonstrations on the social, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe.

Those that are held in police custody have been subjected to torture, ill treatment, denied access to medical care, food and lawyers. The treatment of WOZA and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (MOZA) members highlights the Zimbabwean government's intolerance of peaceful public demonstrations.

In 2005, 260 women were arrested on Zimbabwe's parliamentary Election Day for holding a peaceful post-election prayer vigil. Some women were carrying babies; some were forced to lie on the ground and were then beaten by Police. In September 2010, 83 WOZA and MOZA activists were arrested during a march to commemorate International Peace Day in Harere.

In March 2011 WOZA activists were arrested during various meetings to discuss social issues in Bulawayo, but were released on the same day without charge.

In May 40 members of WOZA were beaten by riot police as they marched peacefully against excessive electricity bills.

PICTURED: Members of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) in 2009 © Amnesty International

TAKE ACTION

Please write, to the Deputy Commissioner General (Crime), giving brief details of the cases outlined above and expressing concern at the repeated arbitrary arrest, intimidation, harassment and ill-treatment of WOZA and MOZA activists. Calling on him to respect the rights of WOZA and MOZA members to exercise their constitutionally and internationally guaranteed rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Send a message of support to WOZA members:
Suggested message: In solidarity with your important human rights work...

SEND APPEALS TO:

Innocent Matibiri, Deputy Commissioner- General (Crime), Zimbabwe Republic Police P.O Box 8807, Causeway Harere Zimbabwe

FAX: + 263 4 253 212

SALUTATION: Dear Deputy Commissioner- General

SEND SUPPORT TO:

WOZA
PO Box FM701
Famona
Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

Write Letters Save Lives Raise Funds

Letterwriting Marathon – 3 - 17 December 2011

The pen is a mighty weapon and your words have the power to shine a light into the darkest places; to open prison doors and bring hope to those being held behind them. So choose your weapon and join us for the 2011 sponsored global Write for Rights Letterwriting Marathon.

Writing letters is at the very heart of Amnesty International and this December we're asking all of our supporters to celebrate our 50th birthday by acting once more either by signing up as a letterwriter or by sponsoring other letterwriters.

Across New Zealand, groups and individuals are setting letter writing and fundraising targets and preparing to write as many letters as they can in order to raise funds and awareness. In Auckland the challenge is to write 1200 letters in 12 hours at a public event in Aotea Square. We've also got confirmed events in Dunedin, Wellington, Tauranga and Christchurch for you to be part of.

Letter writing is an effective tool for change and the results are tangible, many former prisoners of conscience say that messages of solidarity gave them hope in their darkest hours and believe that pressure on governments from organisations like Amnesty, helped secure their release.

It's easy to take part. Here's how:

- If writing individually use the cases on page 8-9 – there's plenty more information on these and other human rights defenders you can write on, on our website.
- Host a letterwriting event in your own home, favourite cafe or set up a table outside the post office and invite all your friends and family to join you. If it's a public event, let us know and we'll advertise to the wider Amnesty membership in your area.
- Set a target for the numbers of letters you write and the money you wish to raise and then seek sponsorship.
- Set up a dedicated Fundraise online page by visiting <http://myamnesty.org.nz/fundraiseonline/> or request a Write for Rights Letterwriting Marathon Kit (which includes posters, appeal cases, a letterwriting guide, sponsorship forms)
- If letterwriting isn't your thing how about sponsoring your local letterwriting team by visiting www.fundraiseonline.co.nz and searching for Amnesty International.

Once Write for Rights goes live keep checking www.amnesty.org.nz/lwm2011. We'll be updating New Zealand's tally as we hear back from you and adding our figures to the world total. Once you've finished, raise a Toast to Freedom – you're contributing to it by your actions.

You can request a Write for Rights kit by phoning Renee Moore on 0800 266 378 or emailing her on campaigns.intern@amnesty.org.nz.

GOOD NEWS: YOU HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN

**TOGETHER WE HAVE ACHIEVED
SOME GREAT SUCCESSES,
INCLUDING THE STORIES
HIGHLIGHTED ON THIS PAGE.**



Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) leaders released

Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu, two key WOZA leaders were released from prison on bail on 4 October.

This is the third time this year the pair have been arrested or have been forced to go into hiding to avoid arrest. And each time WOZA activists have been targeted - including Jenni and Magodonga - Amnesty International has been there.

Most recently charged with kidnapping and theft, both women were detained for 13 days without any access to necessary medication despite both recovering from recent surgical operations. Ten other WOZA activists were also detained along with them but were later released.

All were arrested on 21 September after police used excessive force to break up a peaceful march marking United Nations International Day of Peace.



Prisoners released in Myanmar

In early October nearly 200 political prisoners were released in Myanmar. For years Amnesty International has campaigned for these releases and the decision highlights how, together, we can help liberate such human rights defenders as Zarganar, Su Su Nway and Zaw Htet Ko Ko.

“We are celebrating the freedom of people for whom we have campaigned for years,” said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Director. “The now confirmed release of more than 200 political prisoners this month shows that all those letters and petitions can have a real impact in individual cases.”

But there are still up to 1800 prisoners of conscience who remain behind bars in Myanmar. We’ve heard comments from senior government officials that more releases may be planned – and so we are keeping the pressure on for the release of all prisoners of conscience.



Sexuality identity rights activist honoured

A prestigious global human rights award was presented in Geneva to a Ugandan woman who has fearlessly defended the rights of her country’s threatened lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera is the winner of the 2011 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, awarded annually by 10 of the world’s leading human rights NGOs, including Amnesty International.

She is the founder and executive director of the LGBT rights organisation Freedom and Roam Uganda.

The situation for Uganda’s LGBT community is extremely difficult, with numerous documented cases of discrimination, arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention, torture and other ill-treatment based solely on sexual orientation and gender identity. Activists who work to expose such abuses are frequently targeted.

“I’ve lived my life fighting openly for gay rights in Uganda, and I’ve had to pay a price for that,” Nabagesera previously told Amnesty International.

“I’ve been evicted from house to house; my office has been evicted; I can no longer move on the streets openly; I’ve been attacked.”

Despite the ongoing intimidation and threats against her, Nabagesera has continued to advocate publicly and in the media on behalf of Uganda’s LGBT community, both at home and abroad.

PICTURED

LEFT: Leaders of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu, 16 August 2008. © Private

MIDDLE: Zarganar

RIGHT: Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera. © Karen Veldkamp / Amnesty International

Go Palau!

Amnesty International welcomes the news of Palau’s signing of eight core human rights treaties, marking a significant step in the protection and promotion of human rights in the country. By signing the eight human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Palau has demonstrated leadership and a commitment to protect human rights by becoming party to these eight conventions.

AMNESTY BRIEFS



PICTURED: Richard Brown in Santiago, Chile

Cycling for Freedom

2300km is the distance cyclist Richard Brown has covered on his South American freedom cycling challenge so far.

\$1000 is the amount of money he has raised for Amnesty International.

On the 19th August Richard set out from Santiago, Chile on a journey that could last up to two years and cover well over 10,000km.

The Christchurch resident said he has for a long time wanted to travel the world and decided that cycling offered him a perfect means of transport to explore at a slower pace, allowing him to become more connected and aware of the environment around him.

"Cycling gives me a great sense of freedom, so hopefully I can use mine to help others realise theirs," says Richard.

So far on his journey he has battled desert winds, altitude sickness and a bout of dysentery but undeterred he is carrying on. Richard is heading northward and plans to be in Bolivia for February and continues northwards to the USA with Vancouver, Canada the finish line.

Richard is looking for other keen cyclists to join him on his epic journey, and is contactable at ricbrown@gmail.com

To learn more about Richard's trip visit his blog www.rubberandchains.blogspot.com or see his Fundraising Online page to make a donation <http://bit.ly/r3qcMb>



PICTURED: Avondale College

Freedom Week Thanks you

Freedom Week 2011 saw our activists, volunteer collectors, school groups and local coordinators step up to the challenge of Be One More and what a week it was!

We would like to thank everyone who got involved – you all did an amazing job.

Freedom Challenge is how our Youth Network participates in Freedom Week and again they've exceeded expectations. With a theme of "Be a lifesaver: Keep the heartbeat for human rights" our high school and university teams poured a huge amount of big-hearted creativity into events that ranged from art exhibitions to speed dating; street theatre to debates; trivial pursuits to cake sales.

Along the way they got media coverage and raised attention and activism on behalf of the social justice group Women of Zimbabwe Arise and the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado. They generated thousands of appeals and have to date banked \$15,778

Shop online with Amnesty this Christmas

Stuck for gift ideas? Why not give the gift of human rights this Christmas and shop online at the Amnesty web shop. Send season's greetings and defend human rights by selecting from our range of Christmas cards or choose a gift from our selection of T-shirts and small stocking fillers.

Or, if you're looking for something for the person who has everything, why not give a gift membership? For just \$20 give a 12 month subscription membership and your friend will receive a welcome pack and a 50 Years pin badge or for \$50 your friend will receive the same membership but will also receive a Please Release Me T-shirt. Place your order using the enclosed leaflet or via our webshop www.amnesty.org.nz/shop



PICTURED: Mao Hengfeng after being tortured © Private

Fundraising appeal update

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our recent appeals. Both Mao Hengfeng and Abuzar Al Amin, our featured prisoners of conscience in our mid-year appeal have been released! While this is great news, both remain under strict surveillance and the charges against Al Amin remain.

With your support, we will continue to campaign on their behalf and ensure their rights are protected. So far, we have raised \$10,125 towards our Child Soldier campaign but have yet to reach our target. If you haven't yet had a chance to donate to this appeal, please send a gift of whatever you can afford (see donation slip) to Amnesty International NZ, PO Box 5300, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141 or call Julie on 0800 266 3789 or donate online at www.amnesty.org.nz.

Child Soldier campaign background: approximately 250,000 child soldiers are denied their childhood and manipulated by adults into fighting their wars every day. They are forced to hurt, to kill, to work for, and provide services to armed groups and forces, things that no child should ever be exposed to. Together we can demand immediate action now from those in power to stop the wide scale recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Governance Team vacancies

There have been a number of recent changes on the Governance Team (GT) of Amnesty International Aotearoa New Zealand, as the editorial highlight.

In October two vacancies on the GT were advertised, a decision on these positions will soon be made and we will keep you posted with details via our website.

Please note the AIANZ office will be closed over the Christmas period from 23 December to 9 January.



GIVE THE GIFT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Visit Amnesty NZ's Web Shop this Christmas

www.amnesty.org.nz/shop

