

FACTS, FIGURES AND SUCCESSES

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY

During the past 50 years, Amnesty has become a powerful voice for those risking their lives for freedom and human rights. With Freedom Challenge, you ensure that human rights voice continues to be heard.

Amnesty International was founded in **1961** by British lawyer and former student activist, **Peter Benenson** after he read about Portuguese students sentenced to seven years in prison for raising their glasses in a toast to freedom.

The famous Amnesty International candle wrapped in barbed wire was inspired by the ancient Chinese proverb; *"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."*

"I spent three years and four months on death row and 10 more years in prison. Amnesty continued to send letters and parcels during that whole time. I had been thrown all alone into a dark tunnel forever and they sent me letters from the outside to keep my spirits up, to hang in there. I cannot express how much comfort it was that somebody from the outside remembered me and how much it strengthened me."

Kim Song-Man, 2009

The first Amnesty candle was lit by a Nazi concentration camp survivor, and this was the promise Peter Benenson made at that time - *"Be of good comfort. We have today lit such a candle that shall never be put out."*

Amnesty International has now more than **three million supporters, members and activists in over 160 countries and territories, in every region of the world.**

In 1977, Amnesty International was awarded **the Nobel Peace Prize**, for *"having contributed to securing the ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world"*. It was received on behalf of the organisation by Thomas Hammarberg, who became Secretary General in 1980.

From 1961 until the end of 2010, Amnesty International conducted at least **3,341 missions to research human rights abuses** around the world.

Amnesty International has produced and published an estimated **17,093 reports and public documents on human rights**, since its foundation. This figure does not include Urgent Actions or press releases.

Amnesty International works in **all languages**. In addition to its four core languages of Arabic, English, French and Spanish, it works closely with national sections and local partners to ensure that human rights are understood by everyone, in any language.



When **Vaclav Havel** was imprisoned in 1979 - simply for his beliefs - a worldwide network of activists refused to forget about him. After he left jail, Vaclav Havel eventually became president of a new Czech Republic.

"It's up to all of us to try, and those that say that individuals are not capable of changing anything are only looking for excuses." **Vaclav Havel**

'When I was arrested, I was tortured for only five days, but my other companions were tortured for 12 days, so Amnesty spared me six or seven days of torture, which is for me the equivalent of six years in prison, so therefore the organisation saved my life during that time.'

Imen Derouiche. Female Tunisian student





Famous supporters over the years include: Alanis Morissette, Annie Lennox, Asian Dub Foundation, Bono, Bruce Springsteen, the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Harrison Ford, Jacques Chirac, John Cleese, Mick Jagger, Peter Gabriel, Puff Daddy, Kim Dae-Jung, Radiohead, Sting, Tony Blair, Tracey Chapman, U2, Yasser Arafat, Yoko Ono, Youssou N'Dour and Yoweri Museveni.

Rock star Mick Jagger signing Amnesty International's UDHR campaign pledge in 1997

There have been 12 former prisoners of conscience which Amnesty International has worked with who have received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Amnesty International **Urgent Action network** was established in 1973 by an Amnesty researcher to enable the swift, worldwide mobilization of people to take action at short notice when an individual was identified as being in immediate danger, or when a human rights crisis was taking place. From 1985 to 2010 20,544 Urgent Actions were distributed, plus 10,536 Urgent Action follow

"I was sentenced to death after an unfair trial... Amnesty International intervened and protested strongly to the President and also in the press. The execution was stopped. Amnesty-International had the lead role in stopping my execution which was also acknowledged in the press."

Hafez Ibrahim. Yemen, age 16

"It's only when you have millions of people coming together and the hard research and evidence that Amnesty brings to bare – that combination is what is going to crack the challenges of the future."

Salil Shetty, Amnesty International Secretary General

The **death penalty** is the ultimate denial of human rights. It is the pre-meditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state. Soon after its foundation in 1961, Amnesty International began sending appeals to prevent the execution of prisoners of conscience. Progress has been dramatic in the last few decades. In 1977, only 16 countries had abolished the death penalty for all crimes. Thirty years later, that number has grown to 90.

In 1973 Amnesty International launched its first campaign against **torture**. By 1975 Amnesty helped convince the United Nations to act and commit to a Convention against Torture.

'May I take it that the assembly wishes to adopt the Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment? It is so decided.' **UN speaker**

"Amnesty does not forget the people and the cases that it works with. Amnesty International has worked with me for over 30 years. Every time there was a violation, it supported me in different ways... it has helped me to continue the fight for the respect of human rights and freedoms. I appreciate it all and I highly respect Amnesty and its work."

Radhia Nasraoui. Tunisian human rights defender and lawyer

