

WIRED

FOR PEOPLE PASSIONATE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS
MAY/JUNE 2014 VOLUME 44 ISSUE 003

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



WE CAN
STOP
~~TORTURE~~



INSIDE THIS WIRE



START HERE. START NOW. STOP TORTURE.

Find out why Amnesty's Stop Torture campaign needs you to stand between the torturer and the tortured. **PAGE 4.**



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Getting WIRE

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Cover image:
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Graffiti found on the wall of Security Prison 21 (S-21) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. A former high school, it was used as a prison and torture facility by the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975-1979. Now called the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, the building serves as a memorial to the many people who suffered here.
www.amnesty.org/join

EDITORIAL A WORLD FREE FROM TORTURE: IMAGINE THAT

We have that world clearly in our sights. Amnesty has campaigned to stop torture for over 50 years, and we are not giving up. Because torture is never, ever justified. It is barbaric and inhumane.

As our timeline on pages 6-9 shows, decades of tireless campaigning have already brought huge achievements, including the UN Convention against Torture.

Yet people just like you are still being tortured all over the world. You will meet five of them in this issue of WIRE: Alfreda, Ali, Claudia, Dilrom and Moses (pages 10-17).

By supporting Amnesty's Stop Torture campaign, you'll be joining a global movement of millions. Together, we will stand between the torturers and the tortured, sending a clear and simple message to the powers that be: Stop torture.

Join us on our journey. We all have the right to live in a world that is torture-free.

Read WIRE online and our LIVEWIRE blog at www.livewire.amnesty.org and follow us on Twitter at [@AmnestyOnline](https://twitter.com/AmnestyOnline)

AGENDA

GOOD NEWS & UPDATES



PROTECTING MOTHERS AND BABIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Award-winning camerawoman Annalet Steenkamp films Zanele Ndlovu being interviewed (above) by Amnesty in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, January 2014. Two weeks earlier, Zanele went into labour, waited six hours for an ambulance, and reached the hospital five minutes before giving birth.

Our new short film, *A Broken Lifeline*, will show how transport costs, treacherous roads and too few ambulances threaten the health of pregnant women and new babies in South Africa's remote rural areas.

We will push the authorities to provide them with better access to healthcare, as part of our My Body My Rights campaign. Look out for the film and our new major report in August.

Watch the trailer for *A Broken Lifeline*: <http://bit.ly/LifelineSA>

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR MY BODY MY RIGHTS PETITION

An incredible 280,000 people worldwide have called on their governments to protect young people's sexual and reproductive rights, as part of our new My Body My Rights

campaign. Amnesty's Secretary General Salil Shetty handed your signatures to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon ahead of the UN Commission on Population and Development in New York, USA, in April. The decisions made at this meeting will shape future policies on everything from young people's right to sex education to women's right to make free choices about their bodies.

For more updates about My Body My Rights, see pages 22-25.

YOUR TOP 10 MOST MEMORABLE DEATH PENALTY FILMS

When we released our annual *Death Sentences and Executions* report in March, we asked our social media followers to vote for the best films about the death penalty. The response was overwhelming! Here is the result:

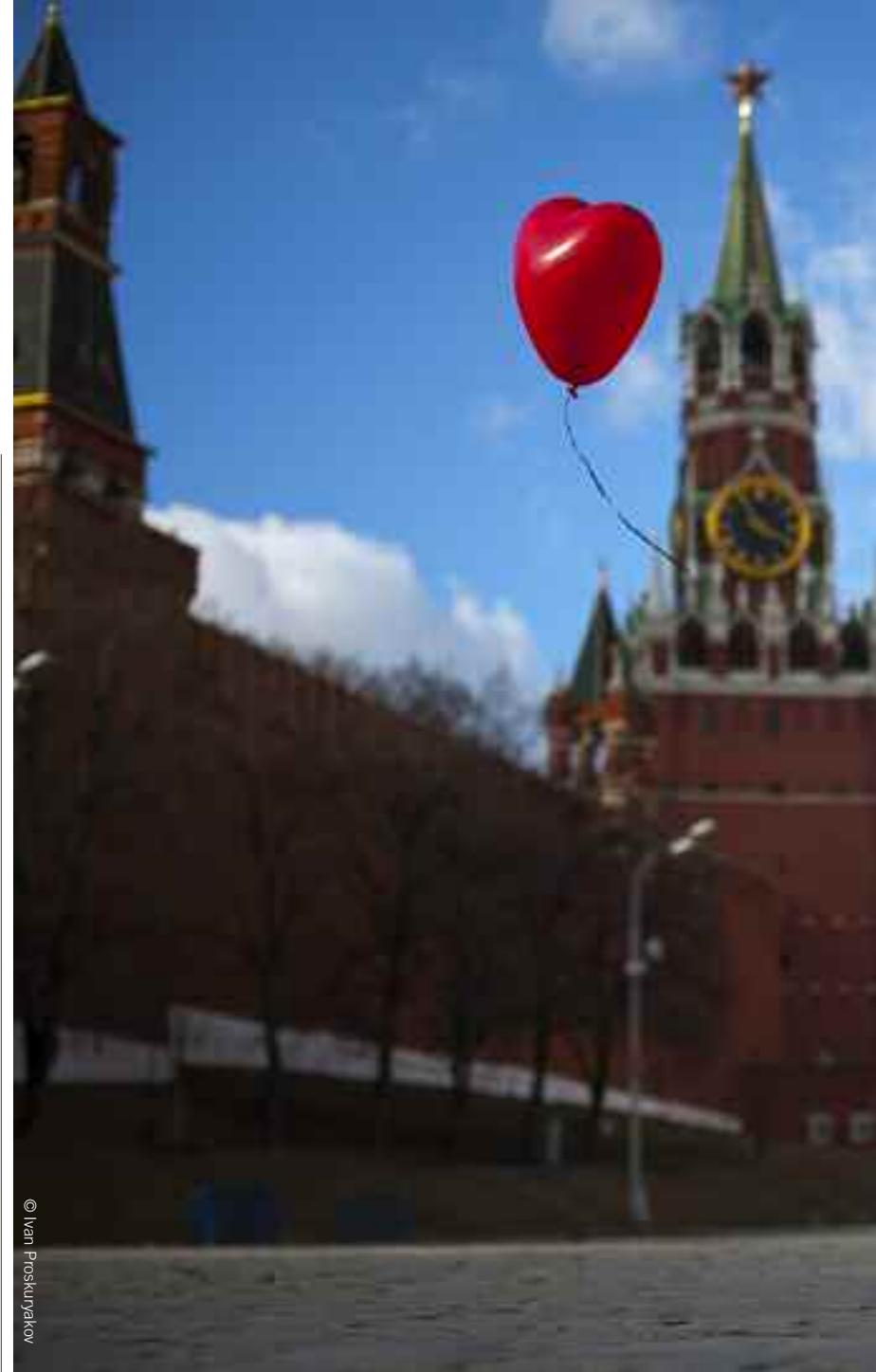
1. The Green Mile (1999)
2. Dead Man Walking (1995)
3. The Life of David Gale (2003)
4. Paths of Glory (1957)
5. The Stoning of Soraya M. (2008)
6. The Ox-Bow Incident (1943)
7. Let Him Have It (1991)
8. The Decalogue V (1988)
9. Monster's Ball (2001)
10. Pierrepont: The Last Hangman (2005)

www.amnesty.org/death-penalty

'LIKE I HAD STRUCK GOLD'

Have you ever wished that complex human rights issues could be simplified and made available in one user-friendly reference guide? Amnesty's new *Fair Trial Manual*, published in April, does exactly that.

Don't just take our word for it: "When I found the *Fair Trial Manual*, I felt like I had struck gold," said Dr. Vivienne O'Connor from the US Institute of Peace. It is "yet another defining publication by the organization that is the gold standard in human



rights," Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, from the Kenyan Supreme Court said.

Download your free copy at www.amnesty.org/fairtrials

ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS IN PAKISTAN

Published on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May, our new research shows how journalists across Pakistan are being harassed, abducted and killed with alarming frequency.

At least eight journalists have been killed since the current government came to power in June 2013, including five so far this year

(as of 2 April). Their attackers include state intelligence officers and members of political parties and armed groups like the Taliban. The authorities tend to only offer token protection, once threats against a journalist start attracting publicity.

Only a handful of people have ever been successfully prosecuted since Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh was convicted for killing *Wall Street Journal* journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002.

Sign our petition to stop attacks against journalists: <http://bit.ly/jOurn0>
www.amnesty.org/pakistan

UP FRONT

JOURNALISM IS NOT A CRIME

By Conor Fortune, News Writer at Amnesty International.

One brisk but unseasonably sunny winter morning, I found myself on the roof of my London office, some gaffer tape over my mouth, a camera trained on my face. Around a dozen of my colleagues from Amnesty's international press office were huddled together in the same strange predicament.

Fortunately for us, this wasn't for some "proof of life" portrait by hostage-takers, intended to extract a ransom from afar.

We were there because – as journalists and media workers – we felt compelled to stand up and protest against colleagues being deprived of their liberty just for doing their jobs.

We were just a few of many: thousands of people in more than 30 cities worldwide took part in the broadcasting network Al Jazeera's #FreeAJstaff global day of action in February. Three of their staff members have been imprisoned in Egypt since December 2013.

Their case is just the tip of the iceberg. Amnesty has documented a global pattern of journalists being threatened, physically assaulted and jailed on trumped-up charges, including "endangering national security" or "terrorism."

Armed conflicts and governments' overly broad use of national security measures and surveillance are contributing to a clear deterioration of freedom of the press worldwide, finds the Reporters without Borders' *World Press Freedom Index*.

In 2013, 211 journalists were in prison globally and 99 were killed while carrying out their work, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists' *Attacks on the Press* report.

Amnesty has recently documented journalists coming under threat in many countries, including Azerbaijan, Liberia, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Syria.

As we mark World Press Freedom Day in May, these facts are sobering.

On the rooftop that day, we wanted to show our support and respect for journalists and their job. Journalism is not a crime. Journalism is not terrorism. Responsible journalism is an important cornerstone of freedom.

When journalists are threatened, arrested, attacked or otherwise cowed into silence, the truth dies. It is up to all of us to keep it alive.

Follow Conor on Twitter at @writesrights and his colleagues at @amnestypress



© Amnesty International

A girl with a heart-shaped red balloon at a #WithSyria vigil in Moscow, Russia, 13 March 2014. Thousands of people in more than 40 countries – including many Amnesty activists – gathered to mark the third anniversary of Syria's ongoing crisis. The artist Banksy reworked his iconic 2004 *Girl with Balloon* image for the event (see below), which was supported by 115 humanitarian and human rights groups. Together, we demanded access to aid for all Syrians in need, lit candles and released red balloons to show solidarity and hope. In April, Amnesty presented UN Security Council members with a petition signed by over 140,000 people worldwide, demanding an immediate end to the suffering of besieged civilians in Syria.



THE POWER OF WORDS

The anthology *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry* has just been published by Simon & Schuster in partnership with Amnesty UK. The book demonstrates the power of the written word and freedom of expression. One hundred famous men – among them John le Carré, Salman Rushdie, Nick Cave and Stephen Fry – give private insights into their souls by contributing a poem that moves them to tears. What they say about the poem and their connection with it is often as powerful as the poems themselves.

Find out more: <http://bit.ly/PoemsMenCry>



© withsyria.com

EMAIL US

We always welcome your feedback and ideas! Write to us at thewire@amnesty.org

WE CAN STOP TORTURE

You've hung from the ceiling for hours. Your muscles scream. Electric shocks convulse your body. Water forced into your mouth. You think you're drowning. Rape. Mock executions. Whatever it takes to break you. To make you submit. To sign a confession, or hand over information. You're hidden away from the world's gaze. You think you are forgotten, you think you are alone.

All over the world, states are torturing people just like you.

We are witnessing a global crisis on torture. Over the last five years, Amnesty has had reports of torture in 141 countries – three-quarters of the world.

Amnesty led the international pressure that resulted in the UN Convention against Torture 30 years ago. Today, laws against torture are in place almost everywhere.

Yet you only have to glance at the news to know that laws alone are not enough. Just earlier this year, police officers in the Philippines hit the headlines when they were discovered spinning a “wheel of torture” as a fun way to decide how to torture their detainees.

Torture is thriving because rather than respecting the law and refusing to tolerate torture, governments are either actively using it or turning a blind eye. That is why we are launching a new campaign.

This time, we are building a powerful barrier between the torturer and the tortured. How? By insisting that lawyers are present during interrogations. That doctors are on hand to examine detainees. That confessions obtained by torture can't

be used as evidence in courts. That detainees are allowed to see their families. And by insisting that anyone who is involved in torture is brought to justice.

We will position ourselves inside the very systems that are failing to protect people. As the stories in this issue of WIRE show, there are some very practical steps that will make a real difference.

Over the next two years, we will campaign to put these safeguards in place. In countries such as the Philippines and Mexico, where torture is widespread and routine in police stations. In Morocco-Western Sahara and Uzbekistan, where the courts often rely on confessions people have made while being tortured. And in Nigeria, where beatings and mock executions are just some of the treatments people face in detention.

We can't do this alone. We need you to join us, and stand between the torturers and the tortured too. Please start by taking action for Alfreda, Ali, Claudia, Dilrom and Moses. Read their stories on pages 10-17 to find out how.

We asked activists worldwide why they want to stop torture:

© Amnesty International



"It is hard to describe how I felt working next door to a police station in Angola in 2003. We could hear the screams of people being tortured and would shout over the wall at the police to stop. I felt helpless. But I now know that working together we can make a big difference by calling on governments to act."

Katharine Derderian, Brussels, Belgium

© AF Rodrigues



"I once heard a torture survivor say: 'The first slap in the face destroyed my faith in humanity, which I had taken a lifetime to build'. You can't protect society by destroying its pillars."

Maurício Santoro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

© Amnesty International



"I was on my way home when police arrested me for not having an identity card. In the cell, police made me endure an internal search by a child detainee. The psychological trauma was shattering. Now I can't rest knowing that Kenya's children might become tomorrow's torturers. I will not stop fighting until we stop torture."

Charles Baraza Nyukuri, Nairobi, Kenya

© Amnesty International



"One of the biggest tragedies of human history is that there are many wrong convictions, when torture is common. If we want to end hatred and vengeance, and build a caring and humane society, we need to unite and stop torture."

Lkhagva-Ochir Dambasuren, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

© Amnesty International



"Torture is one of society's most shameful problems. Those who suffer torture, and their loved ones, are traumatized. The physical scars can be seen, but the mental scars are hidden. No survivor can forget, no matter how hard they try. By campaigning to stop torture I am helping to build a fairer world."

Gony Droni, Tel Aviv, Israel

**START HERE
START NOW
STOP TORTURE**



Find out more about the campaign at www.amnesty.org/stoptorture
Follow @AmnestyOnline and use #StopTorture on Twitter

FIGHTING TORTURE SINCE 1961

Amnesty starts to campaign for political prisoners. We quickly realize that governments worldwide are torturing people.

1967

We uncover widespread torture in Greece after a military coup, including at a major interrogation centre in Athens deliberately set up "to make all of Greece tremble".

1968

"We have reports coming in daily from all over the world of people being tortured."

Martin Ennals, Amnesty's Secretary General 1968-1980

1972

We dedicate this year to fighting torture. Our Urgent Action network starts with an appeal for professor Luiz Rossi, a Brazilian trade union leader at risk of being tortured in prison. Hundreds of activists target the authorities with messages, and he is released the same year.

Our World Conference for the Abolition of Torture in Paris, France, almost fails when UNESCO abruptly withdraws permission to host because our report on torture breaches its rules not to criticize member states. We quickly find another venue, and 250 delegates from 40 countries attend. We wire more than 1 million petition signatures – protesting against torture and collected in over 90 countries – to the UN from the Paris conference.

In response to international pressure the UN General Assembly approves its first ever resolution denouncing torture.

1973

"If the world cannot react with shock anymore to this ultimate shamelessness, the last lights will go out."

Renowned psychiatrist Erich Fromm speaks at our World Conference for the Abolition of Torture.

We launch our first campaign to "make torture as unthinkable as slavery".

© Amnesty International / Photography: Bill Guhl / Design: Beat Knoblauch



▲ Amnesty Switzerland poster: "Freedom for political prisoners. More human rights for more people."



© Private

URGENT ACTION

◀ The singer Joan Baez speaks at the conference.



© Ole A. Buenget

▲ Norwegian activists hold a banner that reads "torture is happening in 66 countries". Oslo, October 1975.



© Frits Behrendt

▲ Dutch cartoon: World leaders stage a protest against Amnesty receiving the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize for our work, including on torture.

1974

1975

1976

1977

1983

The UN adopts the Declaration Against Torture on 9 December. This landmark decision is key to creating a legally binding UN Convention against Torture.



© Xavier Zeegers for Amnesty International

▲ Amnesty Belgium poster: "Defend prisoners of conscience worldwide. Fight for the abolition of torture and the death penalty."

We campaign to stop Uruguay's military regime torturing detainees.



© Amnesty International

▲ Amnesty Mexico poster: "Torture in Uruguay".



© Private

▲ "They torture here": Nuns, priests and other church members protest against torture outside Calle Borgono 1470, Santiago, Chile. Many people testified that this building was a secret detention centre, where secret police tortured political suspects during General Augusto Pinochet's military regime (1973-1990).

Amnesty founding member Helen Bamber helps establish the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, now known as Freedom from Torture.

The UN Convention against Torture enters into force on 26 June after 20 states ratify it. It's a significant step towards eradicating torture worldwide.



© Amnesty International / Design: Len Breen

1984

Finally, after years of campaigning by Amnesty, the UN General Assembly adopts the Convention against Torture. Two of the most challenging issues were universal jurisdiction over alleged torturers, and how to implement the treaty effectively.



▲ "Torture instruments": artwork made by the son of a disappeared prisoner in Guinea. It also shows people being hanged from a bridge.

1987

The UN declares 26 June International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. We expose 100 companies worldwide that produce and sell torture instruments.



© Jean Gouders

1997

Former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet is arrested in London, after Amnesty reminds all European governments of their obligation to detain him under the Convention against Torture. Despite Pinochet being released in 2000 after a controversial medical test, this is a bold step forward for international justice.

In a vital precedent, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda rules that rape is a form of torture.

1998

1999

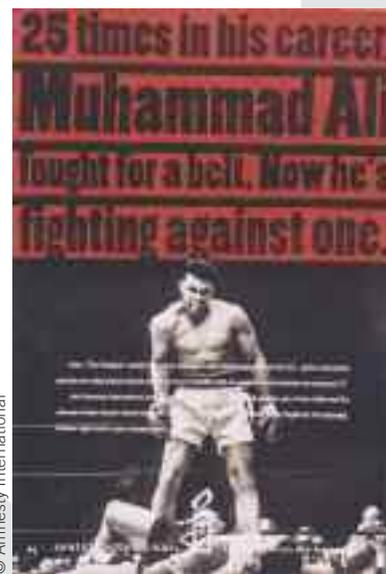
2000

"Take a step to stamp out torture" is our first online torture campaign. In the first year alone, tens of thousands of people take action for 17 people and groups at risk of being tortured.



© Amnesty International/Kazutoshi Murata

▲ Activists and torture survivors from Myanmar protest outside the Burmese embassy in Tokyo.



© Amnesty International

▲ Amnesty USA poster: Former heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali backs our campaign to ban stun belts from US prisons. The belts are operated remotely and give prisoners an eight-second electric shock of 50,000 volts.

"It's torture by remote control."

William Schulz, Amnesty USA

We start to focus on combating torture used in the US-led “war on terror”, including techniques such as ‘waterboarding’.

The UN adopts the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which establishes a combined national and international inspection system for places of detention.

2002



© Amnesty International

▲ Activists from Amnesty Denmark protest against secret “rendition” flights of terror suspects. Over the next six years, Amnesty exposes the role played by several European states in secret CIA detentions and terror suspects being tortured.

An historic ruling by the European Court of Human Rights finds Macedonia responsible for colluding with the USA to abduct and torture suspected terrorists. Our research shows that many other European governments have done the same.

2012

2014

More than 150 countries have ratified the Convention against Torture. But it still happens – worldwide. That is why we are launching our new campaign, Stop Torture, right now.

“Together we will intervene whenever people are tortured. Together we will hold torturers to account.”

Amnesty’s Secretary General, Salil Shetty

**START
HERE
START
NOW
STOP
TORTURE**

2005

2006

2008

The UN Committee against Torture says that states should also prevent and punish torture that isn’t committed by governments. This includes rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and human trafficking.

© Amnesty International/Harrison Mitchell



▲ A huge demonstration against torture of terror suspects takes place outside British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s residence in Downing Street, London, UK.

© Rachid Tniouni



▲ Protesters in Morocco hold a sit-in outside their parliament to mark the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June.

© Amnesty International



▲ “No deals on torture – close Guantanamo now”: Activists demonstrate near the US embassy in Manila, Philippines.



© Amnesty International

STANDING UP TO CLAUDIA'S TORTURERS, TOGETHER

Salil Shetty, Amnesty's Secretary General, describes an inspirational meeting with Claudia Medina, a torture survivor in Mexico.

"I am here to ask for your help," said Claudia Medina when I met her in Mexico earlier this year. "I'm going to report a crime of torture."

Her words touched me, because I knew what Claudia had been through. At 3am on 7 August 2012, marines broke into the home she shared with her husband and three children. They tied her hands and blindfolded her, put her in a pick-up truck and took her to a naval base in Veracruz City. They accused her of being a member of a powerful and violent criminal gang, which she flatly denied.

Claudia later told us how the torturers gave her electric shocks and wrapped her in plastic to stop her bruising when they beat and kicked her. They sexually assaulted her. Then they tied her to a chair and left her outside in the scorching afternoon sun.

The next day, Claudia was pressured into signing a testimony she had not even read. She was paraded before the media as a dangerous criminal. But later that month, all but one of the charges against her were dropped, and she was released on bail.

For some Mexican police and military officers, torture is the method of choice for investigating crime. They torture people into signing false statements, and

use them as evidence to prosecute. These statements can then be used to suggest that Mexico is fighting crime successfully.

Claudia was able to tell a judge that she had been tortured, and he ordered an investigation. But those responsible – the Federal Attorney General's Office – still haven't followed up. Crucially, they are also preventing Claudia from undergoing a UN-backed medical examination. If this had been carried out immediately after her torture allegations were made, Claudia would have had stronger evidence of the treatment she suffered.

"I used to be afraid and thought about not speaking out, but I'm not willing to accept this."

Almost two years later, Claudia is tired of waiting. "I used to be afraid and thought about not speaking out," she told me. "But I'm not willing to accept this." She knows that thousands of people have suffered the same treatment. And she wants to stop it happening to others.

That's why Claudia has decided to go public with her story as part of Amnesty's new, global Stop Torture campaign.

I know what she is up against, trying to challenge the power of the Mexican armed forces and police. But I also know that she is not alone: we stand with her.

Above: Salil Shetty meets torture survivor Claudia Medina in Mexico City, February 2014.

So I replied that yes, Amnesty, with our more than 3 million supporters, can and will help her and other torture survivors. That's why we exist. Together, we will pressure governments to give them justice, and stop it happening again.

Meeting Claudia was a huge source of inspiration and hope for me. It makes me feel strong that a woman who has been tortured still has so much spirit, so much courage and so much conviction.

And it makes me feel safe in the knowledge that if Claudia can do this, so can we.

TAKE ACTION >>>

Your message can help Claudia: Please urge the Federal Attorney General to investigate her torture allegations fully and promptly, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice. He should also allow Claudia to have a full and impartial medical examination according to UN standards.

Start your message 'Dear Attorney General/Estimado Señor Procurador' and send it to:

Jesús Murillo Karam, Federal Attorney General/Procurador General de la República, Procuraduría General de la República, Paseo de la reforma 211-213, Col. Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06500, Mexico City, Mexico

Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx

Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (keep trying, and ask for "fax")

THE LONG WAY HOME

When Dilorom Abdukadirova went to a protest in the city square, she ended up first as a refugee, and then sentenced to 18 years in prison. Read her sad story, and find out how you can help her.

Dilorom Abdukadirova (pictured above), is a devout Muslim woman from Andizhan, a city in south-eastern Uzbekistan. Until 13 May 2005, she was a farmer, growing and selling vegetables with her family and caring for her four sons.

That day, she went to Babur Square in the city centre to protest about the state of the economy. She had heard the President would be there, but he never came. Speakers called for justice and an end to poverty. Suddenly the security forces started shooting at the demonstrators. They killed hundreds of people, including many women and children.

Caught up in the panicking crowds, Dilorom just ran. She and around 500 other protesters covered around 25 kilometres on foot. Confused and scared, she crossed the border into neighbouring Kyrgyzstan without realising.

From Kyrgyzstan she was sent to a refugee camp in Romania. Australia then recognized her as a refugee and granted her permanent residency in 2006.

But Dilorom was desperate to be reunited with her family, and wanted to go home. The authorities in Andizhan assured her family that she had nothing to fear, and she arrived at Tashkent airport in January 2010. But the police immediately detained her and questioned her for four days.

She was briefly reunited with her family, but then the authorities detained her again. She wasn't allowed



© Private

to speak to a lawyer or see her family for two weeks.

In April 2010, Dilorom was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Her alleged crime was “attempting to overthrow the constitutional order” and exiting Uzbekistan without a travel permit.

Her family said she looked emaciated in court, with bruises on her face. They think she was tortured and forced to appear without her hijab. After a secret trial in Tashkent women’s prison in 2012, her sentence was extended by eight years for allegedly “deliberately breaking prison rules”.

We believe Dilorom was sentenced for taking part in the Andizhan demonstration, and that she is a prisoner of conscience.

TAKE ACTION >>>

Your letter can help Dilorom: Please urge the President to drop all charges against her, to release her immediately and unconditionally, and to investigate the torture allegations promptly and impartially.

Start your letter ‘Dear President’ and send it to: President Islam Karimov, Rezidentsia prezidenta, ul. Uzbekistanskaia 43, Tashkent 700163, Uzbekistan



© Maxim Marmur (AFP) Getty Images

Above: A policeman patrols beneath a giant election poster for Uzbekistan’s long-standing president, Islam Karimov, 2007.

UZBEKISTAN: WHERE TORTURE IS ‘SYSTEMATIC’

Uzbekistan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, President Islam Karimov has won four consecutive presidential elections. There is no official political opposition.

The country is virtually closed to foreign media and human rights organizations, with tight government control on national media. Getting a permission to travel abroad is very difficult for Uzbekistan’s 30 million inhabitants. Political dissent is stamped out quickly and harshly, and corruption runs deep.

The United Nations has called torture in Uzbekistan “systematic”. Amnesty receives persistent and credible reports that people are tortured in detention. This includes: handcuffing people to radiators or suspending them from ceiling hooks and beating them; asphyxiating people; inserting needles under their finger- or toenails; giving people electroshocks; and raping and sexually assaulting women and men.

Our new campaign aims to stop people in Uzbekistan from being treated like this.

PICTURING THE PAIN



These drawings were made by Ali Aarrass, pictured above with his baby daughter in happier days. Today, Ali is serving a 12-year sentence for terrorism in Morocco. He denies all the charges and says he was forced to confess after suffering the kinds of torture shown here.

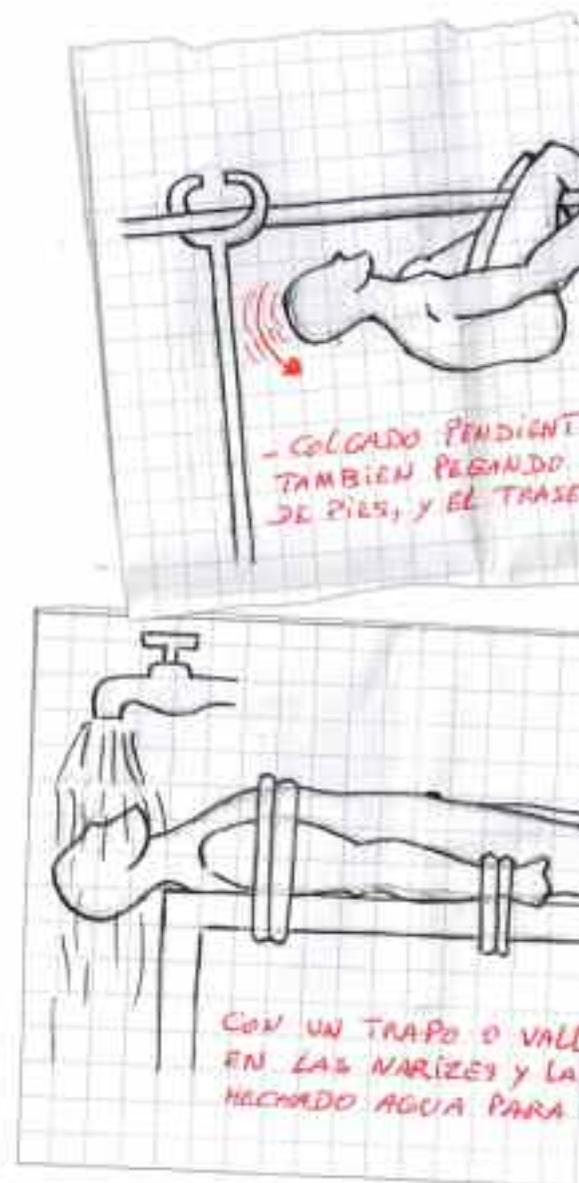
Ali was born in 1962 in the Spanish enclave of Melilla in northern Morocco, but moved to Belgium aged 15. He has dual Belgian and Moroccan nationality. Ali returned to Melilla in 2005 with his wife to live closer to his ageing father, and earned a living by running a coffee shop.

The Spanish authorities suspected Ali of terrorism in 2006, but found no evidence against him. They imprisoned him in 2008 after the Moroccan authorities asked for him to be extradited on fresh terrorism charges. He was kept in solitary confinement for two years and eight months. Ali protested by going on hunger strike three times, but had to stop because of his worsening health.

This turned out to be just the beginning of his ordeal. In December 2010, Ali was extradited to Morocco. He says Moroccan intelligence officers then tortured him in a secret prison for 12 days. When he finally arrived at the notorious Salé II prison near the capital, Rabat, other inmates said they were shocked by the torture marks on Ali's body and how traumatized he was.

Ali was convicted of using weapons illegally and participating in a group intending to commit terrorist acts in November 2011. His conviction was based solely on statements he made after being tortured. He is now serving a 12-year sentence.

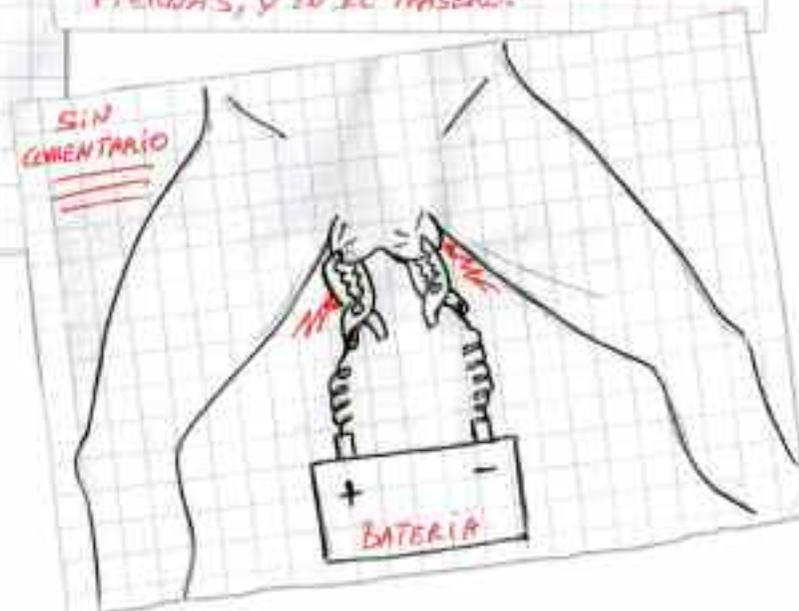
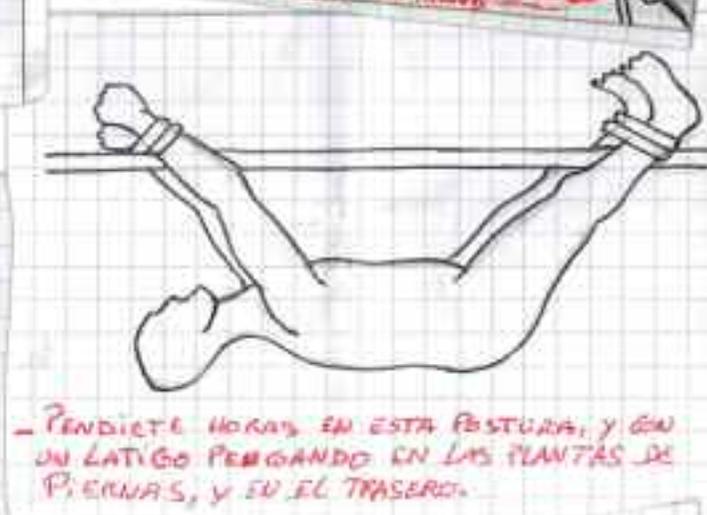
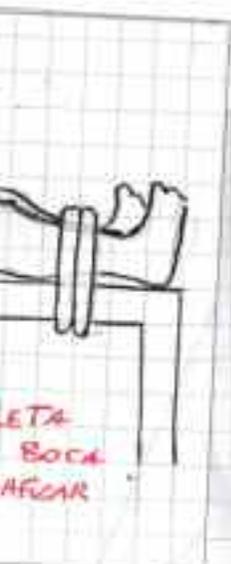
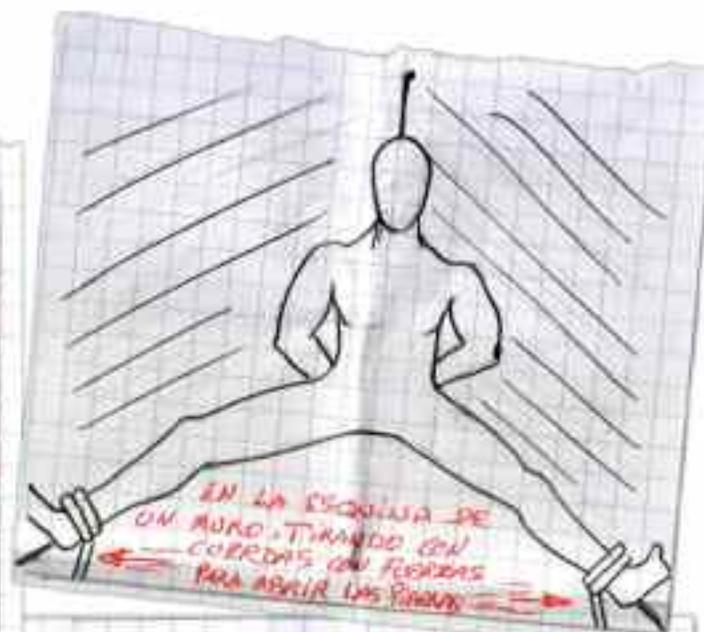
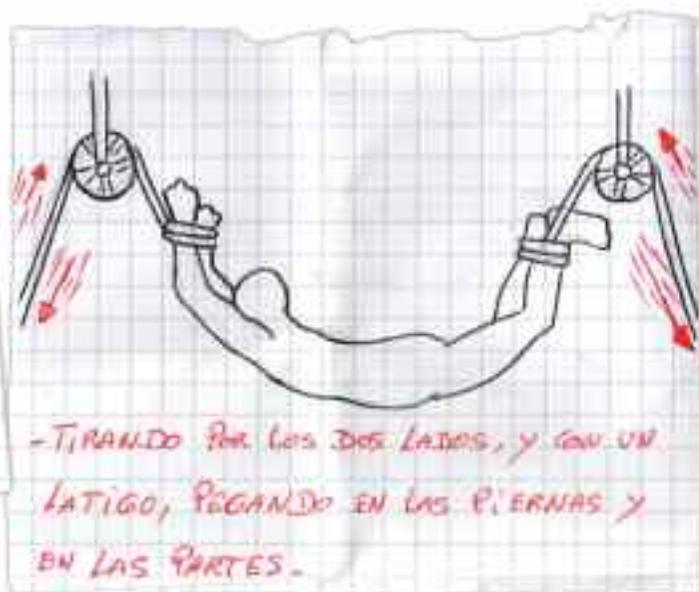
Since then, Ali says he has been forced to strip naked in his cell and prevented from sleeping at night. He protested by going on hunger strike again in July and August 2013. Despite many complaints from his family, his lawyers and Amnesty, the Moroccan authorities have failed to investigate his torture allegations.



TAKE ACTION >>>

Your letter can help Ali: Please urge the Minister of Justice to investigate his torture allegations fully and promptly, and to implement the recent decision of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention calling for his immediate release.

Start your letter 'Your Excellency' and send it to:
 El Mustapha Ramid, Minister of Justice and Liberties
 Ministère de la Justice et des libertés
 Place El Mamounia – BP 1015
 Rabat, Morocco
 Fax: +212 537 73 47 25



We have translated the handwritten descriptions of Ali's torture from Spanish (clockwise from top left):

"Hanging for hours, also hitting on the soles of the feet and the behind."

"Pulling from both sides, and hitting the legs and the [private] parts with a whip."

"At the corner of a wall, pulling with ropes to open the legs"

"Spending hours in this position, and hitting the legs and the behind with a whip."

"No comment/"Battery"

"Until loss of consciousness"/"Battery"

"With a tap or cleaning cloth, pouring water into the nostrils and the mouth to drown."

All images © Private

ROBBED OF A FUTURE

Moses Akatugba went from being a schoolboy planning his future to a torture survivor on death row. Find out why his life took such a terrible turn, and how we can help him.

Aged 16, Moses Akatugba was a normal schoolboy from southern Nigeria. Full of hope for the future, he was relieved to have finished his secondary school exams and was waiting anxiously for his results. His dream was to fulfil his late father's wishes and study medicine.

On 27 November 2005, he said goodbye to his family and left to visit his aunt. When he didn't come home as planned, his mother became worried. A widow, she was supporting her five children by selling food at a local market in Effurun, a busy city in Delta state.

"The pain I went through was unimaginable. In my whole life, I have never been subjected to such inhuman treatment."

If Moses had been allowed to call a lawyer – or even just his mother – it could have protected him from being tortured. But for the first 24 hours, nobody knew where he was.

A local street vendor eventually visited Moses' mother, saying she had seen a group of soldiers arrest him. Moses never came home again. And from here, his story is bleak.

'UNIMAGINABLE PAIN'

Moses later explained that the soldiers had shot him in one hand, beat him on the head and back, and taken him to a local army barracks for interrogation. There, they showed him a corpse and asked him to identify it.

When Moses said he didn't know the dead man, the soldiers beat him again. They then took him to a police station, where he says the officers beat him hard with machetes and batons. They tied him up and left him hanging upside down from a ceiling fan for hours. They also pulled out his toe- and fingernails with pliers.

"The pain I went through was unimaginable," Moses says. "In my whole life, I have never been subjected to such inhuman treatment."

The police suspected Moses of stealing three phones, some money and vouchers in an armed robbery. He has always denied these charges. The officers forced him to sign two pre-written "confessions", which were later used as evidence during his trial.

Moses' mother says that when she was finally able to see him in his police cell the next day, he had terrible injuries and scars. He hadn't received any medical treatment. Because his injuries were so serious, she said she paid for a doctor to see him three days a week for over five weeks afterwards.

MOSES WAS A CHILD

Moses spent the next eight years in prison. On 12 November 2013, he was sentenced to death by hanging. The conviction was based on his “confession” and the alleged robbery victim’s testimony. The police officer who investigated his case didn’t turn up in court.

Because Moses was a child when he was arrested, he should never have been sentenced to death. It is illegal under international law. Also, any “confession” obtained after torture should not be allowed as evidence in court.

But Moses is just one of thousands of people across Nigeria who have been tortured into confessing a crime. Amnesty International’s research shows that the police and military routinely use torture to interrogate suspects, and courts are sentencing people based on the resulting “confessions”. Torture allegations against army and police officers are very rarely investigated or punished.

Torture often starts in the first 24 hours after an arrest – a crucial window. If a suspect is allowed to call a lawyer who can represent them, as is required by law, it can help protect them and potentially stop the torturers in their tracks.

Amnesty and other organizations continue to call on the Nigerian authorities to explicitly criminalize torture and other ill-treatment.

A DREAM DESTROYED

Today, Moses is a traumatized and isolated 24-year-old man. He only sees his family twice a month since being transferred to a prison much further away in 2006. “I never thought I’d be alive until today,” he told us recently.

His dream of becoming a doctor has been destroyed. Moses says that what pains him most is that while he’s been in prison, many of his former classmates have gone on to university and found good jobs.

His lawyer has filed an appeal against his death sentence. But for now, Moses remains trapped in prison, robbed of a future, his life hanging in the balance.



TAKE ACTION >>>

Your letter can help Moses get justice: Please urge the authorities to commute his death sentence and carry out an independent investigation into his torture allegations.

Start your letter ‘Your Excellency’ and send it to:
Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, Governor of Delta State
Office of the Governor, Government House, Asaba
Delta State, Nigeria

Right: A school photograph of Moses, taken before his ordeal began.

Background: A street in Effurun, near the place where Moses was arrested by the Nigerian army in 2005.

THE ACTIVIST DOCTOR

Doctor Aurora Corazon A. Parong's long-standing fight against torture has been shaped by her own experiences in detention. After leading Amnesty Philippines for seven years, she is now pursuing justice for people who were tortured during President Ferdinand Marcos's authoritarian regime (1972-1986). Dr Parong told us about her work and what difference Amnesty's Stop Torture campaign can make in people's lives.

How did you become an 'activist doctor'?

After I graduated, I went into community health and trained people in poor villages to become community health workers. With training, they could help each other, even when there were no doctors.

I started my clinic in April 1982, and was arrested three months later, allegedly for treating a rebel. The police raided my clinic without a warrant, and confiscated medical equipment like syringes and needles.

I was in detention for one and a half years, and in solitary confinement for some of that time. They didn't torture me physically – it was primarily psychological torture.

After I was released, I joined the Medical Action Group, an organization of health professionals providing health services to victims of human rights violations. Initially, we treated infections and then we developed bio-psychosocial services (a treatment approach that looks at health in the context of biological, psychological and social factors) for victims of torture and their families.

I was Executive Director of the Medical Action Group for six years and then started working with Task Force Detainees, an organization that documents human rights violations. I joined Amnesty in 2007.

How can doctors help to secure justice for torture survivors?

Usually there are no eyewitnesses to torture – except the victim and the torturer. Often, torture survivors aren't believed and don't get justice because they don't have corroborating statements or documents.

Doctors can help by carrying out medical and psychological examinations and documenting any evidence of torture. Then physicians can testify in court. With enough evidence, a case can be made and this increases the possibility of convicting and punishing the perpetrator, and securing justice for the victim.

How did you first come into contact with Amnesty?

The first time I "met" Amnesty was in detention. Some of the political prisoners were farmers, and received cards and letters from Amnesty members. Since they couldn't read English, I explained what the letters meant and helped them reply.

The letters boosted our morale, knowing that people knew and were concerned about our situation. The guards would inspect them and read what was inside. They knew the world was watching.

Those letters helped to change the attitude of the guards. They grew to treat us with respect.



Connecting with people outside the Philippines during President Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship was very important. The solidarity of people from other nations gave us the strength to continue the fight for human rights and freedom.

One Amnesty member – a Danish navy captain called Erik Bloch – wrote frequently, and later became a friend. I continued to communicate with him and was very excited when we eventually met at a human rights conference in Denmark many years later.

As an activist, you defend the rights of other people. In doing that, you meet people who become part of your life because you've been on the same journey.

What are your hopes for Amnesty's new Stop Torture campaign?

Despite the fact that we have the Convention against Torture – which says that freedom from torture is an absolute right – torture continues. We have had an anti-torture law in the Philippines since 2009, yet to this day, no one has been convicted for torture.

ALFREDA'S STORY

Alfreda Disbarro is a single mother from Quezón City, Philippines. She was at an internet café near her house when the police stopped her and accused her of drug dealing. She denied this and emptied her pockets voluntarily, revealing just a mobile phone and a five-peso coin.

The police then pointed a gun at her, punched her in the chest, handcuffed her and took her to police headquarters. To force her to confess to the crime, Alfreda says a senior police officer then pinned her against a wall, punched her repeatedly in the stomach and face, hit her with a club, poked his fingers into her eyes, slapped her, forced a mop into her mouth and banged her head against the wall.

Alfreda was in such pain after the beatings that she couldn't eat, had difficulty breathing and kept vomiting for days. Today, she is awaiting trial in a local jail charged with selling and possessing illegal drugs. Although she has been examined by a medical officer, her torture allegations against the police haven't been investigated.

TAKE ACTION >>>

Your message can help Alfreda: Please call on Acting Inspector General Alexander Roldan to investigate her torture allegations promptly and fully, and bring anyone found responsible to justice.

Start your letter 'Dear Inspector General' and send it to: Police Director Alexander Roldan, Inspector General, Internal Affairs Service, Philippine National Police Compound, Camp General Crame, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines 1100

Email: iaspd@pnp.gov.ph
niasprd@yahoo.com.ph
rias_ncr@pnp.gov.ph



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We need to continue to remind governments that they have an obligation to prevent torture, and to make sure that the perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

I hope we can get torture survivors' stories out to people – stories like Alfreda Disbarro's (see sidebar). Hers is an experience of so many women and men in the Philippines, who remain nameless and do not have access to justice.

I hope that Amnesty's supporters will demand that the Philippine government punish those who tortured Alfreda and create mechanisms to prevent torture from happening again. If everyone in the Amnesty movement works together, we will really make a difference.

Dr Parong is now a member of the Human Rights Violations Victims' Claims Board of the Philippines. Similar to Truth and Reparation Commissions in other countries, it is tasked with recognizing human rights abuses committed while the country was under martial law and providing reparations to victims.



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Top: Dr Aurora Parong (second person from left holding the banner) at the sixth *Basta, Run Against Torture!* event, organised by a coalition in the Philippines to mark the International Day in Support for Victims of Torture, 26 June 2012.

Above: Aurora being visited by her mother in detention, 1982.



‘THE MOST AMAZING EXPERIENCE’

When thousands of people arrived by boat from north Africa on the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa in 2011, it caused a media storm. To investigate the reality behind the headlines, Amnesty Italy decided to send a group of activists camping there. The result was so powerful it grew into a yearly international event, as part of our S.O.S. Europe campaign. We spoke to the organizer, Fabio Ciconte, who is busy planning the third international human rights camp in Bulgaria this July.

The camps have been one of the most amazing experiences of my life. There is a huge difference between people who have and people who haven't been to one. It's not very typical to have this kind of emotional experience in Amnesty. After the camp, people understand very well what Amnesty is and what it can do, and what the word "activism" means.

When thousands of migrants came to Lampedusa in 2011, the mainstream media talked about "the invasion" and the "criminalization of migrants". We wanted to go there with our activists to understand the situation and what we could do to improve it. Almost 70 people from Italy stayed at a campsite for a week in July.

We realised that the reality was completely different. People on Lampedusa weren't racists, and there was no "invasion". They felt bad about the negative media coverage.

RESCUING PEOPLE WITH THEIR OWN BOATS

Instead, locals had opened their homes to the migrants, gave them clothes, food and water. They were rescuing people with their own boats. Journalists, soldiers, police, NGO workers – all arrived in their hundreds, but no one was talking to the local people.

We decided to show our thanks for what they had done by lying down and spelling out the word "grazie" ("thank you") on the beach. We took photos and printed postcards of it afterwards, and gave it to people around town. The locals were really impressed and thanked Amnesty. It was the first time they had felt that people from abroad understood their situation.

Our actions helped people to understand that migrants from north Africa had been arriving in Lampedusa for 10 years. It was nothing new. The difference in 2011 was that thousands arrived after the "Arab spring".

That's why we decided to send an S.O.S. signal to Europe the following year. Everyone on the island said they needed help from the EU to protect migrants' human rights. One small island can't do it alone.

CAMPING IN THE HOT SPOTS

It's a tough and intensive week. The main goals are to push the S.O.S. Europe campaign with a good action and to train people in activism and how to communicate our message.

Amnesty activists from all over Europe attend, along with refugees and migrants themselves. It's important to bring in their experiences – not as "special guests", but alongside everyone else. (Read Saleh's and Kusha's stories on page 20-21.)

We organise the camp in places where human rights violations happen, so we start by understanding the local situation. Then we conceive the idea for the action, and split into small groups – activism, communications, campaigns, etc – to organise it in detail. At the end of the week we do the action. In Lesvos, Greece, last year we sent an S.O.S. signal from a boat. In Lampedusa in 2012 people spelled out S.O.S. by standing in the sea, to show that refugees and migrants were drowning in the Mediterranean (see photo on left).

Right: Activists send an S.O.S. signal to Europe's leaders from the waters of Lampedusa, 2012. At least 2,600 refugees and migrants have died crossing the Mediterranean to Europe since 2011.

This July we want to achieve two things. First, to let the world know about the situation for refugees and migrants arriving in Bulgaria, and what the human rights problems are. We also plan to work with local activists to increase Bulgarian people's understanding of the needs and rights of people arriving in their country. We are organising the camp in partnership with the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

CHANGING THE WAY WE TAKE ACTION

The last two international camps have changed the way people take action as part of the S.O.S. Europe campaign. The flash mob beach protest organized by Amnesty outside the European Council in Brussels, Belgium, on 20 March is an example of that.

In Bulgaria in July, activists from all over the world will be in a migration hot spot, campaigning alongside local activists and refugees themselves. For us, this is a new approach to activism. The outside world can really see Amnesty at work. That's why it's so important to be there.

Fabio Ciconte is an activism consultant working with Amnesty Italy.

FIND OUT MORE >>>

Our international S.O.S. Europe human rights camps aim to empower and train activists, and link people up to share ideas and experiences. Participants go on to become campaign ambassadors in their own countries at the heart of Amnesty's global movement.

To find out more, contact your local Amnesty office or visit www.whenyoudontexist.eu and When You Don't Exist on Facebook.



© Amnesty International (Photo: Giorgos Moutaris)

‘THE CAMP CHANGED EVERYTHING’

Saleh Ebrahim crossed the Greek border with Turkey on foot in 2011 after paying US\$3,500 to a smuggler. Originally from Somalia, he is now seeking asylum and working as an interpreter in the capital, Athens. Saleh told us how taking part in Amnesty’s 2013 human rights camp in Lesvos, Greece, turned him into an activist.

People who are fighting for human rights and those who are abused need to be together. I said before I’d never shake hands with somebody from Israel. But the camp in Lesvos changed everything. I’m still talking, writing and thinking about what happened there.

We didn’t talk about ourselves. We talked about what we’ll do tomorrow, about human rights, about how we can change things. You fight for people you’ve never met before.

I’ve been attacked twice in Greece. The first time they broke my arm. It makes me really down. People can’t go out, people are afraid. I might die in Athens. But I will die trying.

Friends of mine have left and already have their papers in Sweden, Norway and Finland. They ask why I’m still in Greece. But I want to stay here, and I have the right. It’s my choice. I’m not going to move

out. That’s what I’m fighting for. And this place needs people.

The sea is not a sea anymore, it’s a cemetery. Maybe there were friends of mine on that boat from Somalia [that sank near Lampedusa island, Italy, in October 2013]. They died, they disappeared. Every day you hear about these things.

I will stay a human rights activist, whatever it takes. It’s such an honour to be part of this, because this is what we really have to fight for. Not for land, oil, or money. We can’t use weapons. That’s why people get involved. It’s a sweet experience. I give my whole life to this.

Above: Activists send an S.O.S. signal from the Aegean Sea, asking European governments to stop human rights abuses against refugees and migrants along Europe’s borders. Lesvos, Greece, July 2013.

THE LUCKY REFUGEE

The S.O.S. Europe activism camp goes to the core of what Amnesty is all about: bringing passionate people together who believe in and push for change, says Kusha Bahrami, an Iranian refugee now living in Greece.

My name is Kusha Bahrami, a lucky refugee from Iran. I could have been the Syrian refugee I met on a Greek island, whose family was abandoned by smugglers in the middle of nowhere. He went to search for water for his children, and ended up being detained because he had lost his papers proving that he comes from Syria.

I could have been the Somali boy in Athens who was caught and beaten on his way home from school. Or I could have been the young Pakistani man who was attacked and killed by two men on his way to work in Greece, just because of his skin colour.

I'm a lucky refugee – but maybe I'm not. When I arrived in Greece I tried to submit my asylum application to the police. I showed them my admission letter from UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, in Turkey. The answer was beatings and three months of suffering in a detention centre.

I was forced to go on full hunger strike to see my mother. I was forced to try to commit suicide in fear of deportation.

These days, even though I'm free now and this is several years behind me, I feel like a prisoner in my own home. I fear what might happen to me when I go out in the street. And this is not just a phenomenon in Greece – it is rising everywhere in Europe.

Amnesty's S.O.S. Europe campaign is trying to protect people like me. Last year we were in Lesbos, a Greek island close to Turkey, for a week of action to protest against what is happening to refugees and migrants at Europe's borders. This initiative goes to the core of what Amnesty is all about: bringing passionate people together who believe in and push for change. After the camp, our participants became 10 times more active.

There are many people like me out there who need a voice. We need people to stand with us, who will not accept how refugees and migrants are treated in Europe today. Together, I believe we can make a change.



Above: Kusha Bahrami (left) with Nikos Kasapakis at Amnesty's second international human rights camp in Lesbos, Greece, July 2013.

TAKE ACTION >>>

The next few months are vital: in June, the EU will adopt a new strategy for how it handles migration and asylum. Through our S.O.S. Europe campaign, we want to push them to put people before borders.

Join the conversation on Twitter using #SOSEurope and follow @dontexisteurope

MANY VOICES MAKING CHANGE

Through our new My Body My Rights campaign, we are working with women's rights activists in Nepal to empower people to speak out and make decisions about their bodies, health and lives.

Reena Pokhrel, from Dailekh district in mid-western Nepal, sat before a room of strangers in Kathmandu. She had travelled a long way to the capital to speak in public for the first time – about something that many women do not even discuss with their families. She was one of a panel of experts at the 20 February launch of Amnesty's report *Unnecessary burden: Gender discrimination and uterine prolapse in Nepal*. It was her opportunity to talk openly about her harrowing experience.

Married at 15, Reena had six children in the space of a decade. She developed uterine prolapse – where the pelvic muscles weaken and the uterus descends into the vagina – after her first child was born. Fearing the stigma often associated with this condition, she suffered its debilitating pain silently for 21 years before she received the medical treatment she needed.

Amnesty's report identifies gender-based discrimination in Nepal as the root cause of high rates of uterine prolapse. The launch was the first step in our campaign to get the government to address uterine prolapse as a human rights issue by implementing a preventive strategy that tackles gender-based discrimination.

This has been the long-term aim of local Nepali women's rights activists – activists who have worked for years to secure previous gains within the country.

ACTIVISTS ON THE FRONTLINE

Among those activists are Dr Aruna Uprety and Samita Pradhan, two stalwarts at the forefront of Nepal's women's rights movement.

Dr Uprety is a public health and human rights expert, and founder member of the NGO Rural Health Education Services Trust. For 27 years, she has been working to improve the reproductive health of women and girls in Nepal.

"In 1995, when I was working in the far western region of Nepal, I conducted a small health camp for women," she recalled, speaking to us in March. "In seven days, we examined 600 women and found that 150 had some form of uterine prolapse."

"NGOs have been campaigning on uterine prolapse for many years. This time it was heard loud in Nepal and outside the country as a human rights issue."

The experience prompted her to write a short article about the condition, which was published in a Nepali newspaper. And so a gradual process of raising awareness about the condition began. She wrote repeatedly about it, sharing some of the most distressing cases she came across.

"We found many women would insert things in their vaginas so the uterus would not come out – stones, bangles – anything to stop it," she said. "I remember one case where a woman had a ring pessary inside her for 15 years and she did not take it out. She was unaware she needed to change it every three months. Stories like this made me start writing a lot about uterine prolapse in national and daily newspapers and advocating that the government needs plans and programmes for it."

Her determination led to positive results. "Other activists also started talking and taking action," she said. "We raised the need for uterine prolapse prevention. We recognized that health workers, nurses and midwives need to know how the condition can be prevented. Once we provided training to these people we found that the cases of uterine prolapse decreased. It was a small project but one with good results."

MAKING HEADWAY

When Samita Pradhan began championing women's reproductive rights about a decade ago, the going was tough. Now Executive Director of the Centre for Agro Ecology and Development (CAED), she recalled some of the challenges she faced back then.

"At first, it was not easy for individuals and organizations to work on uterine prolapse, it was not well accepted," she said. 'Now, CAED works with some 20 local women's rights organizations across Nepal. Women at the village level are organized and demanding women's health rights and health services from the government."

That work has paid off at the government level as well. "There's been a big change in government, they have set up a unit, a focal person at the Family Health Division under the Ministry of Health and Population. There is a space where we can discuss the issue."



© Amnesty International (Photo: Prakash Mathema)

Still, much remains to be done, especially to prevent the condition. “Reducing gender discrimination and establishing reproductive rights is a long-term goal for CAED,” she said. “It is a challenge to make men and women at the local level understand what it means to have reproductive rights. People regard women with uterine prolapse as having a normal condition after giving birth to children. It is equally challenging to make policy makers and donors understand that the problem needs to be prevented. For them, it is a matter of satisfaction to just provide surgical treatment and see quick results.”

For both women, Amnesty’s work highlighting the link between uterine prolapse and gender

discrimination helps support their efforts to secure a comprehensive prevention strategy for the condition. “Uterine prolapse is against our constitution and through Amnesty’s report we now have a tool that can be used to talk with our government, policy makers and international governments,” said Dr Aruna.

“It was a big issue for the Government of Nepal when Amnesty International started working on this issue,” said Samita. “National and international NGOs have been campaigning on uterine prolapse for many years, [but] this time it was heard loud in Nepal and outside the country as a human rights issue.”

OVER 85,000 PEOPLE SIGNED OUR PETITION >>>

Thank you to all of you who called on the Nepali government to recognize uterine prolapse as a human rights issue. Find out more at www.amnesty.org/unnecessaryburden



Above: Amnesty’s Secretary General Salil Shetty (seated left) with Dr Aruna Uprety (standing) at the global launch of My Body My Rights, Samundrataar village, Nuwakot district, central Nepal, 6 March 2014.

A GLOBAL CONVERSATION BEGINS

From a rural village to the internet, the launch of Amnesty's My Body My Rights campaign kicked off a global conversation on sexual and reproductive rights.

It started in a village in central Nepal. Amnesty's Secretary General Salil Shetty and local women's rights activists met with rural women in Nuwakot district. Together they talked about the discrimination that many women face in Nepal, and the impact this has on their ability to make decisions about their own bodies and lives (see page 22).

"With My Body My Rights, we want to help the next generation realize and claim their sexual and reproductive rights," said Salil Shetty as he launched the campaign.

Meanwhile, Amnesty released a series of provocative images, kicking off a global discussion online. The photographs feature body art created exclusively for the launch of Amnesty's My Body My Rights campaign by Japan-based artist Hikaru Cho (also known as Choo San).

The conversation had started, and as more and more people uploaded their own body art photos as part of that discussion – and for a chance to win one of Hikaru Cho's artworks – a global community began to emerge, ready to defend sexual and reproductive rights.

The campaign continues until 2015, and covers Nepal, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco-Western Sahara, Tunisia) and Ireland. Look out for more in coming issues of WIRE.

TAKE ACTION >>>

Join our global conversation on sexual and reproductive rights at #MyBodyMyRights

To find out more about our campaign and to take action, visit www.amnesty.org/mybodymyrights. Find out who won our body art competition on www.livewire.amnesty.org



Photos left to right from top: My Body My Rights launch events in Morocco, Togo, Austria, Canada, Nepal, Japan, Rio, Spain, Mali and Mexico.

只為女權

MY BODY MY RIGHTS



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© Paul Thompson



© Amnesty International (Photo: Prakash Mathema)



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**START HERE
START NOW
STOP TORTURE**

#STOPTORTURE

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