



Emadeddin Baghi was arrested on December 28, 2009, by armed officials. When Baghi assured his wife and daughter that he would remain strong, the officials said that he would not live long enough to need to remain strong.



Why your support is crucial for human rights in Iran

Right now, your support is ensuring that Amnesty International keeps the pressure on Iran to improve human rights.

Your role is crucial. In June 2009, the authorities cracked down on people peacefully protesting the results of disputed elections. Since then, they have arrested hundreds of journalists, human rights activists and members of opposition political parties.

Among the jailed is Emadeddin Baghi, a journalist and human rights defender, who has worked peacefully to improve human rights in Iran for more than 20 years.

Because of his detention, Baghi was unable to travel to Europe to receive the 2009 *Martin Ennals Award*, a human rights prize given annually by Amnesty International

and other organizations to honour exceptional human rights defenders.

When the lives and safety of people are at immediate risk, Amnesty International issues Urgent Action appeals to protect them. In 2009, Amnesty International issued more appeals to protect people in Iran than any other country. An appeal on behalf of Emadeddin Baghi was one of the first Urgent Actions of 2010.

Several journalists and human rights defenders in Iran have been freed following recent Urgent Action appeals (*see text box*). But many others, like Baghi, remain in jail.

Your support for Amnesty is critical: it is with your help that Amnesty is able to expose ongoing human rights abuses, and press for the release of all those who have been unjustly jailed. ■

Freed!

Your support is making a difference:

- **Reza al-Basha**, journalist, freed January 10, 2010
- **Atieh Yousefi**, human rights defender, released on bail January 11, 2010
- **Mahfarid Mansourian**, environmental activist, released on bail February 21, 2010
- **Somayeh Rashidi**, women's rights activist, freed February 25, 2010
- **Dr Mohammad Maleki**, scholar, released on bail March 1, 2010
- **Abdollah Sadoughi**, journalist, freed March 11, 2010

Teddy Bears for human rights!

30 years and 620 bears later, Amnesty member's project is stronger than ever

In the late 1970s, long-time Amnesty International member Joan Francis was shown a teddy-bear knitting pattern by a friend.

Joan immediately had an idea: she would knit a teddy bear and sell it to raise money for Amnesty's Urgent Action Network. Joan sold the bear for \$5 and the money paid for a telegram response to an Urgent Action appeal.

The first bear's name was Wallis "He was a peculiar-looking bear," Joan said. "I forgot to make his body, and simply attached his legs to his head!"

More bears followed – Darcy, Turtle, Tulip, Pansy, Hamish, Jasper. Over the past 27 years, two bears have been created every month for a total of 620. Attached to the arm of every one is a handwritten tag that reads "Hello! My name is Toby

(or Misha or Chico) and I support Amnesty International".

Joan Francis is now 93 years old, and still knitting teddy bears to support Amnesty International's work. The cost of all the materials over the years must have been considerable, but Joan has always made it a matter of principle to donate 100% of the money raised. "If I were to take money, then the whole project has no meaning for me," she said.

Joan has inspired other bear makers at the Sisters of St. John the Divine in Toronto to join her project. To date, their 1,195 bears have provided over \$9,000 to support Amnesty's work. ■

At the age of 93, Joan Francis continues to knit bears to raise money for Amnesty.



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Salil Shetty is Amnesty's new global head

Salil Shetty, an Indian national, will begin as Amnesty's next global Secretary General in June 2010.

He succeeds Irene Khan who is stepping down after eight years as Amnesty's Secretary General. Shetty has been the Director of the United Nation's anti-poverty *Millennium Campaign* for the past six years.

One of Shetty's first international visits as Amnesty's head may be to Canada during the G8/G20 summit.



UN Photo/Mark Garten

Salil Shetty headed the United Nations anti-poverty campaign for six years.

If he visits, he is expected to have an opportunity to meet some of Amnesty's Canadian members. ■

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Igor Koktysh (with his wife Iryna) after being released.

Ukraine releases prisoner of conscience

Amnesty International members will be happy to hear that political activist and musician Igor Koktysh was released in Ukraine on February 1, 2010.

Koktysh is originally from Belarus. The Ukrainian authorities detained him in June 2007 when the Belarus government demanded his extradition. However, he had already been found innocent of the alleged crime in 2002. Amnesty International believes that Belarus was targeting Koktysh because of his activism.

Amnesty considered Koktysh to be a prisoner of conscience, and issued a letter-writing appeal on his behalf. Amnesty members wrote to the Ukrainian authorities and pressed them to release Koktysh immediately.

Speaking from his home in Ukraine on February 4, Igor Koktysh thanked Amnesty International members for their support. He said that he is still adjusting to his freedom and that his first concern is his health. ■

Mexican Indigenous man freed after 10 years of injustice

A Mexican Indigenous man has been freed after almost 10 years in jail following an unfair trial.

Ricardo Ucán Ceca, from Yucatán, was released on December 31, 2009. He had been imprisoned since June 2000. A court had found him guilty of murder and sentenced him to 22 years, though Ricardo Ucán said he had acted in self-defence.

He understands little Spanish and cannot read or write. During his trial he was never given an interpreter, which was his right under Mexico's Constitution.

Amnesty International has pressed the Mexican authorities to ensure that trials are carried out in – or translated into – a language that



© Equipo Indignación

Ricardo Ucán surrounded by his family on the day of his release.

Indigenous defendants understand.

After Ricardo Ucán's conviction, Amnesty and local human rights organizations campaigned for him to be given a fair trial. ■

Prisoner of conscience U Tin Oo freed in Myanmar

Wonderful news came from Myanmar on February 13, 2010, when long-time prisoner of conscience U Tin Oo was released.

A close ally of Aung San Suu Kyi and a founder of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy, U Tin Oo was serving a seven-year sentence.

Asked how he felt after his release, U Tin Oo said, "I don't feel happy because many of my colleagues are still behind bars." The 82-year-old pledged



STR/AP/Getty Images

82-year-old U Tin Oo has promised to continue his work for democracy in Myanmar.

to continue his work for the peaceful struggle for democracy in Myanmar.

U Tin Oo was arrested after a pro-government mob violently attacked an NLD motorcade in May 2003. The authorities blamed Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo for the violence, and both were given prison sentences." ■



Your support is helping to stop the abuses that keep people poor

Amnesty International recently launched the *Demand Dignity* campaign, which will, over the next five years, target the human rights violations that cause poverty. With

your support, Amnesty is defending families unjustly evicted from their homes and land, and demanding better health care and access to education for people living in poverty.

BURKINA FASO: Amnesty campaign wins promise that more women will receive maternal health care

In February 2010, Burkina

Faso's President Blaise Compaoré met with Amnesty International delegates and promised to make maternal health care more accessible to poor women.

The promise came after tens of thousands of people around the world signed an Amnesty petition and the petition was sent to the president. Amnesty also organized a campaign "caravan" which toured the West African country to raise awareness of maternal mortality.

In meetings with the president and other officials, the Amnesty delegates shared the findings from two years of Amnesty research into maternal mortality in Burkina Faso.

Amnesty's investigations have led to a new report – *Giving Life, Risking Death: Maternal Mortality in Burkina Faso* – that tells the heart-wrenching stories of some of the 2,000 or more women who die every year in Burkina Faso from complications during pregnancy and childbirth.



Anna Kari

Fatimata proudly holds her child, a few days after giving birth in north-western Burkina Faso. Poor women in Burkina Faso are at high risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth.

Although Amnesty welcomes President Compaoré's promise, we will continue to campaign until the most vulnerable people in Burkina Faso receive better health care. ■



ZIMBABWE: Amnesty members help spare thousands from eviction

Thousands of people in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, will no longer face forced eviction from their homes and market stalls, due in part to the efforts of Amnesty International members.

In July 2009, Harare's deputy mayor said that the authorities might evict people from "illegal settlements" and informal market stalls across Harare. The deputy mayor said that the people targeted were a health hazard and breaking by-laws.

Most of the people at risk were victims of Operation Murambatsvina, a program of evictions in 2005 that left 700,000 people without homes or livelihoods.



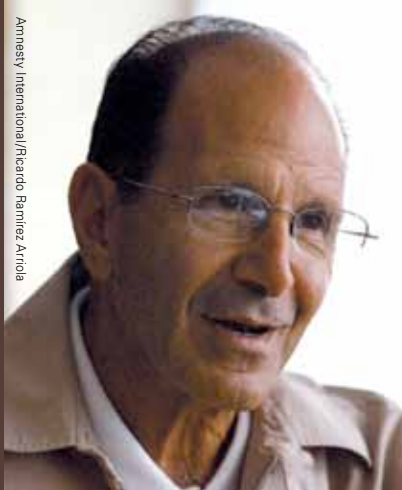
Children stand outside their makeshift home in Harare, Zimbabwe. Harare's mayor has promised to respect the rights of people living in informal settlements.

© Amnesty International

After Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action appeal on July 22, 2009, Harare's mayor met with Amnesty and other organizations representing residents, lawyers and trade unionists.

On December 30, the mayor sent a letter to Amnesty International. He noted that he had received petitions and messages from Amnesty members and supporters.

In his letter, the mayor said that "due to the concerns expressed by some stakeholders, your members included... no effort will be spared in looking for alternative shelter for those affected before they are removed." ■



Amnesty International/Ricardo Ramirez Arriola

"Amnesty International members are living proof that this world can be a better place"

– Father Alejandro Solalinde, Mexican human rights defender

Father Alejandro Solalinde

runs a shelter offering food and rest in Ciudad Ixtepec in southern Mexico. The people who visit the shelter are migrants from Central or South America.

Ciudad Ixtepec is an important rail junction and many migrants travel through the city. Criminal gangs often kidnap and ill-treat the migrants, and the authorities abuse their human rights. Father Solalinde's shelter is a refuge for them.

Because of his work, Father Solalinde has often been threatened and harassed. On one occasion, he was told that his shelter would be burned down if he did not close it. In December 2009, he was warned that a criminal gang was planning to kill him. Amnesty International members have stood by his side and campaigned to protect his safety.

Recently Father Solalinde spoke to Amnesty International about his human rights work and how grateful he is for the support of Amnesty members.

Challenges and dangers

Father Solalinde's work began several years ago when he travelled through Oaxaca State in southern Mexico and saw how criminal gangs abducted and abused migrants. "I couldn't turn my back on what was happening," he said.

The challenges he faces are immense. "I constantly need to try to overcome intimidation, harassment and disrespect from people who don't want me to do my work for migrants. Local authorities, criminal gangs and drug traffickers want to get rid of human rights defenders because we get in the way. But despite all their efforts, we must continue."

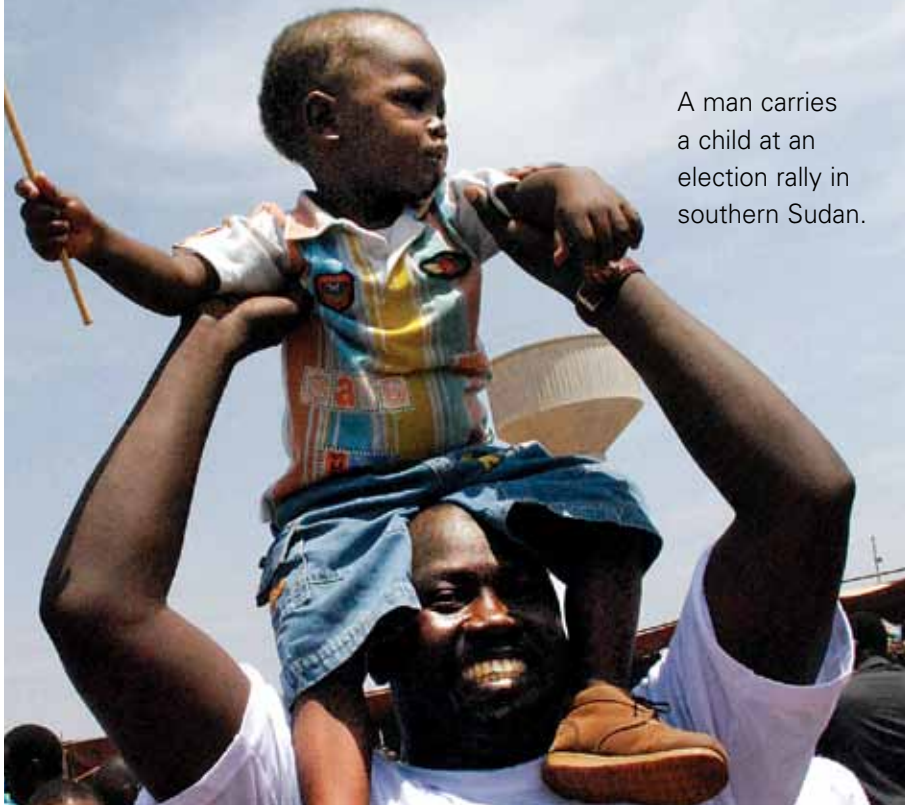
Gratitude to Amnesty members

Father Solalinde expressed enormous gratitude to Amnesty members.

"Through Amnesty International I have discovered that there is more good than bad in this world. Last year I lived through some of the toughest moments of my life, but I didn't feel alone because people from all over the world, people I didn't even know, were writing to me. I felt their love and it helped to keep me going. I call it the globalization of love."

And he had this message for Amnesty members: "Amnesty International members are living proof that this world can be a better place. I would like to thank the members of Amnesty International, on behalf of myself and the migrants, for taking time out of their lives to protect us. You have made us feel that we are not alone, like a family." ■

SUDAN: An ongoing human rights priority in 2010



A man carries a child at an election rally in southern Sudan.

PETER MARTELL/AFP/Getty Images

Sudan is at a critical moment in its history. January 9, 2010 marked the fifth anniversary of a peace agreement that signalled the end of a civil war in the south that killed millions.

One year on from January 9, 2010, a referendum is due to be held to decide the future of Sudan. In January 2011, the people of South Sudan will vote on whether they wish to stay part of a united Sudan or whether they want to become an independent country.

But there is a real danger that war will return. Violence is on the increase in Southern Sudan, and in Darfur in Western Sudan, millions continue to suffer daily.

On January 9, 2010, Amnesty International joined with other human rights organizations in launching the *Sudan365* initiative, which will see a year of campaigning for peace and stability in Sudan. The lead up to the referendum is critical: ongoing global action and attention will be needed if the people of Sudan are ever to live in peace and prosperity. ■

For more information on *Sudan365*, please visit sudan365.org.

HONDURAS: Amnesty researchers report on hidden human rights crisis

A 10-day Amnesty International research mission to Honduras in December 2009 found that there had been numerous human rights abuses since June 2009, when President Manuel Zelaya was forced into exile.

The Amnesty researchers met Honduran human rights defenders like Dina Meza, who lives and talks human rights at every opportunity she is given. She is a journalist, activist and member of the Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared, one of Honduras' oldest human rights organizations.

Dina Meza described how the human rights situation in Honduras has gone back 30 years, to the 1980s, when hundreds of people were killed or disappeared at the hands of the country's security forces. She described how the police had tear-gassed the office where she works, and she warned that there was a hidden human rights crisis in Honduras.

Following the research mission, Amnesty is working to ensure that the government of the new president, Porfirio Lobo, holds the security



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Human rights defender Dina Meza works for one of Honduras' oldest human rights organizations.

forces accountable for human rights abuses committed in 2009. ■

SRI LANKA: Human rights update



ISHARA S. KODIKARA/AFP/Getty Images

After fighting between government and rebel forces ended in May 2009, 300,000 people who fled their homes were forced to live in camps run by the military. Amnesty International launched *Unlock the Camps*, a global campaign that generated over 30,000 signatures. In December 2009, the government announced that families living in the camps could choose to stay or leave.

Several Sri Lankan journalists were freed after Amnesty

Journalist JS Tissainayagam was released on bail after Amnesty members took action.

members called for their release. Journalist Vettivel Jasikaran and his wife Valarmathi were freed on October 26, 2009. On January 10, 2010, journalist JS Tissainayagam was released on bail. He had been sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2009.

Amnesty is calling on the Sri Lankan government to end its harassment of journalists and nongovernmental organizations. A leaked document, which appears to be a government surveillance list of more than 30 journalists and activists, has raised concerns about the safety of the people on the list. ■

“I want to help in any way I can”

Amnesty donor David Kelleher explains why he chose to remember Amnesty International in his will

David Kelleher is a big believer in the huge potential of Amnesty’s global membership to bring about worldwide respect for human rights. He has contributed to Amnesty’s work at many levels, from community action to international decision-making. Based in rural eastern Ontario, David currently serves as president of the volunteer board of Amnesty International in Canada. He’s also a proud member of his local Amnesty group.

Why did you become involved with Amnesty International?

I joined in 1987, motivated by the power of Amnesty International’s member activism to bring about respect for human rights as a normal, everyday way of being for countries around the world.

What motivates you to carry on as an Amnesty activist?

Amnesty is a movement of more than 2 million people, and I have been privileged to meet Amnesty members in countries as diverse as South Africa, Germany, India and Botswana. How inspiring, to know that we are part of a global movement of so many individuals who



Amnesty International/Paul Thompson

act for human rights.

Why did you decide to remember Amnesty International in your will?

Amnesty is in my will because this work must continue, and I want to help in any way I can. ■

To find out how to leave your legacy for human rights, please fill out the enclosed coupon, email giftplanning@amnesty.ca or call 1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789).

**AMNESTY
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Food.
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Freedom.

Celebrate your **Taste** for **Justice** this summer!



Amnesty International supporters share their Taste for Justice, June 2009.

You and friends can **dine in** and **dine out** this summer in support of Amnesty's work to protect and promote women's human rights.

You can take part by dining in – hosting a fundraising BBQ or dinner party at any time – and by dining out – visiting participating **Taste for Justice** restaurants during the month of June.

To register as a Taste for Justice host, or to find participating restaurants in your city, please visit tasteforjustice.ca or call **1-800-266-3789**.

Thank you for helping Amnesty build a safer and more just world for women!

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