



CANADA

**People have rights.
Corporations have responsibilities!**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about human rights violations committed directly or indirectly by some Canadian mining, oil, and gas companies operating in developing countries.

The organization has received disturbing reports about Canadian extractive companies operating in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. Human rights abuses involving corporations are often carried out with impunity. Host nations are frequently unable or unwilling to prevent and punish such actions.

Amnesty International urges the Canadian government to adopt stronger legal and policy frameworks to hold corporations to account for their abuse of human rights in developing countries.

Canada's parliament is considering new legislation on corporate accountability.

Bill C-300, An Act respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas in Developing Countries

says that Canada's government should not provide funding or other support to companies that violate international human rights standards or that badly degrade the environment.

Amnesty International supports Bill C-300. To make sure that the bill passes into law, we need everyone who cares about human rights to express their support for it.



Mining operations are a risky business but the Canadian government should avoid investing in projects that endanger the human rights of vulnerable people. This man was evicted to make way for a Canadian-owned nickel mining project in eastern Guatemala. Had Bill C-300 been law, it might have prevented him from losing his home.

© James Rodriguez

Please write to the Leader of the Official Opposition, Michael Ignatieff.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Express concern about the involvement of some Canadian mining, oil, and gas companies in human rights abuses and explain that you do not want your tax dollars supporting companies that fail to respect human rights.
3. Urge support for Bill C-300, An Act respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas in Developing Countries.

Michael Ignatieff, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Start your letter: Dear Mr Ignatieff
Postage: None required
Fax: (613) 947-0310 or (613) 992-9364
Email: IgnatM@parl.gc.ca

For the full text of Bill C-300, see:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Docid=3658424&file=4>

For more information about Amnesty Canada's Business and Human Rights program, to volunteer or to take action, please visit www.amnesty.ca/business or email bhr@amnesty.ca.

To automatically receive important Business and Human Rights updates by email, send a message to AICES_Business_and_HR-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

From the Preamble of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Therefore the General Assembly proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual **and every organ of society**, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.



CANADA:

Demand an apology for Abousfian Abdelrazik

Abousfian Abdelrazik, pictured here in a family photo, greeted a crowd of media and supporters at Pearson International Airport in Toronto on 27 June 2009. The Federal Court of Canada had ordered the return of this dual Canadian-Sudanese citizen and the government reluctantly agreed to fly him back from Sudan.

You might say that Mr Abdelrazik's journey took six long years. His saga has raised troubling questions about the role that Canadian officials have played in his arrest, detention and alleged ill-treatment, and the subsequent obstruction of his right to return to Canada.

Let's go back to March 2003. Abousfian Abdelrazik left his home in Montreal to visit his mother in Khartoum, Sudan. By December, authorities there had detained him, reportedly tortured him, and accused him of connections to terrorism. We later learned that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) had requested his detention in Sudan.



After being released and declared innocent by the Sudanese authorities, he was nonetheless designated a "terrorist" by the United States and placed on the United Nations 1267 List (the UN no-fly list). Both the RCMP and CSIS cleared him of any charges in 2007, but the Canadian government would not permit his return to Canada, and Mr Abdelrazik remained stranded in Sudan. The Canadian government broke many of its promises to provide new travel documents. Finally, it claimed that Mr Abdelrazik must arrange to have his own name removed from the UN list despite a specific exemption allowing for nationals to return home.

Governments have not only the right, but the responsibility to respond to concerns about terrorism and to protect their citizens. However, any government actions must conform to international human rights law, including protection against torture, unlawful arrest, and detention.

Both Mr Abdelrazik and the Canadian public deserve answers about what happened to him and who was responsible.

Please write to Canada's Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Public Safety.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Ask the Ministers to explain why Abousfian Abdelrazik was detained and why it took so long for the government to facilitate his return to Canada.
3. Urge the Canadian government to apologize to him, to compensate him, and to help Mr Abdelrazik get his name off the United Nations 1267 List.

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Start your letter: Dear Minister
Postage: Free within Canada
Fax: (613) 992 7559
Email: CannoL@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Peter Van Loan
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Start your letter: Dear Minister
Postage: Free within Canada
Fax: (613) 992 8351
Email: VanLoP@parl.gc.ca

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10: Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

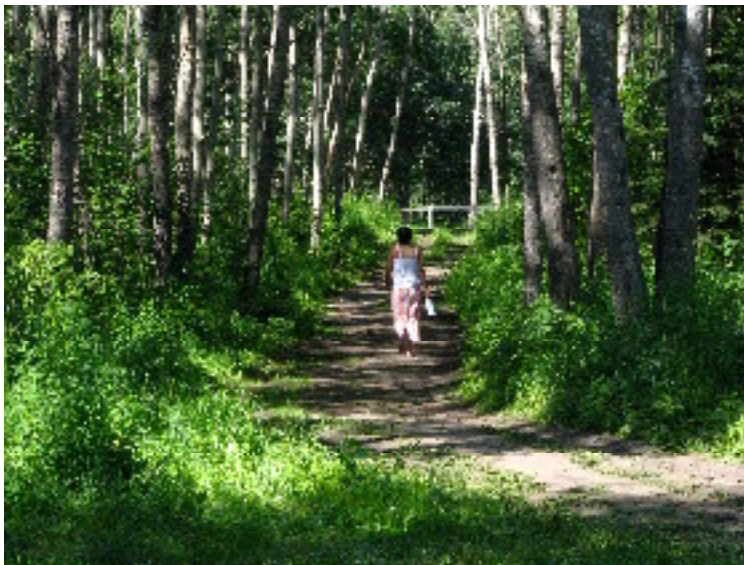


CANADA (Alberta)

Justice overdue for the Lubicon Cree

“All we’re asking is to be a viable community and not dependent on any government. We have that right to be able to say to our kids and our grandchildren, ‘Here’s a land base and here you’re going to be able to live somewhat like the rest of the people in Canada.’”

- Dwight Gladue, in the new Amnesty International film, Our Land, My People: The Struggle of the Lubicon Cree



Corporations have taken an estimated \$14 billion worth of oil and gas from Lubicon Cree land, yet the Lubicon live in poverty.

Photo Dietlind Bork

Corporations have removed billions of dollars worth of oil and gas from the lands of the Lubicon Cree in northern Alberta. The Lubicon, however, live in poverty. Their economy and way of life have been nearly wiped out by the destruction of animal habitat. The government has never provided basic services, like clean water and sanitation.

The Lubicon were left out of a treaty that the federal government negotiated with other Indigenous peoples in the region in 1899. There is still no agreement between the Lubicon and the federal and provincial governments over the ownership and management of their lands and resources. The federal and provincial governments have acknowledged the need to negotiate a land settlement. However, there have been no negotiations since 2003.

In the meantime, the provincial government is allowing oil and gas development to proceed at an astonishing pace on all but a few corners of Lubicon land. The Lubicon have estimated that there are more than four oil and gas wells for every Lubicon person. Now the Lubicon territory is being targeted for tar sands development, which raises more concerns about impacts on the environment.

No other human rights case in Canada has been so often condemned by United Nations human rights bodies.

Amnesty International calls on the federal government to enter into meaningful negotiations with the Lubicon so that a settlement can be reached that will protect their rights under national and international law. Until such a settlement is reached, Amnesty International urges the Province of Alberta not to license any more oil or gas wells on Lubicon land unless the Lubicon people approve.

Please write to Alberta’s premier.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Note that United Nations human rights experts have expressed concern many times about the devastating effects that oil and gas development have on the rights of the Lubicon Cree, including their livelihoods, culture, and way of life.
3. Urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that, until the Lubicon land dispute has been settled, it will permit no new oil and gas development on Lubicon land unless the Lubicon Cree agree to it.

The Honourable Ed Stelmach
Premier of Alberta
307 Legislature Building
10800 – 97th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Start your letter: Dear Premier Stelmach
Postage: 54 cents
Fax: (780) 427-1349

Take action online at www.amnesty.ca/lubicon.

This new Amnesty International website features an online version of the film ‘Our Land, My People,’ background information on the situation of the Lubicon Cree, and lots of opportunities to take action. Visit the website to

- send an email to the premier of Alberta
- join our photo petition
- get your friends and colleagues involved in the campaign.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 20:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
2. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.



CANADA (Quebec)

Long Point First Nation frozen out of decision-making

*“Our only real wealth, our only wealth that counts, is our freedom to be on this land”
– Gérald Hunter, Long Point First Nation, May 2009*

Over the last century, the Long Point First Nation in northern Quebec has been repeatedly uprooted to make way for hydroelectric dams and other industrial development on their lands. This has led to the drastic impoverishment of this Algonquin community of 650 people.



Rosalyn Mathias, Long Point First Nation
Photo Marc-André Pauzé

Because the community has lost access to much of its traditional land, it is now harder to hunt and fish. The change in diet has created new health problems. Illnesses that were once rare are now more common. The loss of traditional sources of livelihood has also led to greater dependence on welfare.

Most of the Long Point First Nation community

now lives on a half a square kilometer plot of land known as the Winneway community. Legally designated an “Indian settlement” (rather than a “reserve”), the Winneway community receives basic services, such as health care, education, and housing, from the government of Canada. Many of these services, however, are substandard. According to the band council, 40 percent of houses at Winneway are overcrowded.

Things are even worse for Long Point families who settled elsewhere on their traditional lands. They have never been granted official recognition. They receive no help from the federal or provincial governments which continue to regard them as “squatters”.

The Long Point First Nation has never signed a treaty or given up any rights to its lands. After repeated protests over logging on the community's traditional lands, the Long Point First Nation and the province of Quebec reached a Framework Agreement in February 2008. The agreement was meant to provide a basis for future negotiations on issues such as employment, economic development, and the use of natural resources. However, the Long Point First Nation continues to be excluded from decisions about the use and management of the natural resources of their traditional lands.

The exclusion of the community from decision-making ignores not only the provisions of the Framework Agreement, but also a series of judgements of the Supreme Court of Canada. They state that federal and provincial governments have a constitutional obligation to consult Aboriginal peoples and accommodate their concerns in every decision that could affect their rights. The exclusion of the Long Point First Nation also disregards the international human rights principle that the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples must be obtained, especially in decisions affecting their lands and resources.

Amnesty International calls for implementation of the Framework Agreement, resumed negotiations, and full respect for the rights of the Long Point First Nation under national and international law.

Please write to Quebec's premier.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Remind the government of its duty to include Aboriginal peoples in the process of making decisions that affect their rights.
3. Call for the Government of Quebec to implement the February 2008 Framework Agreement with the Algonquins of Long Point First Nation.

The Honourable Jean Charest
Édifice Honoré-Mercier, 3e étage
835, René-Lévesque Est
Québec City, QC G1A 1B4

Start your letter: Dear Premier Charest
Postage: 54 cents
Fax: (418) 643-3924
Via website: <http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.qc.ca/premier-ministre/nous-joindre/nous-joindre-en.shtml>

"Our language is bound to our land. To live in our language, we must occupy and live in our land." – Long Point Elder Howard McMartin, May 2009

Kwidjigabwitomin

The Algonquin word “Kwidjigabwitomin” means roughly “We are in solidarity with you.” Send a simple but powerful message of support to the people of Long Point by writing out the word “Kwidjigabwitomin” on postcards, coloured paper, or banners. Add a greeting in English in your own words, if you like. Sign the message and return it to Amnesty International Canada for delivery.

Winneway Community
Amnesty International Canada
312 Laurier Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1H9

For a profile and map of the Winneway community, visit
http://www.anishinabestation.ca/eng/comm_longpoint_en.htm

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 8: States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:

- (a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;
- (b) Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;
- (c) Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights



CHAD: End forced evictions

Security forces have carried out waves of house demolitions in Chad since February 2008. Tens of thousands of people are homeless. More are at risk.

President Idriss Déby Itno ordered the first wave of evictions, demolishing the houses and other structures of people living in Chad's capital city, N'Djamena. In all the evictions since, people have lost not only their homes but also their businesses, tools, and the materials they used to make a living. "The vast majority of families who lost their homes were not consulted by the authorities, were given little or no notice and have not received alternative housing or any other form of compensation," said Tawanda Hondora, Amnesty International's Africa Deputy Director. "The pace of housing demolition in N'Djamena suggests a frightening level of human suffering. The Chadian authorities must respect the rule of law. They must ensure that every person's right to protection under the law is upheld."



Mme Dibie, aged 75, with neighbours in the ruins of her demolished home in N'Djamena, 13 May 2008
© Amnesty International

A forced eviction is the removal of people against their will from their land without legal protections. Governments may move communities, but evictions must take place after exploring all other options and genuinely consulting the people affected. The government must then make sure that evicted families have decent shelter, that productive land is available, or that the displaced people are resettled with access to water, food, and places to work.

The evictions in Chad were not legal according to Chadian and international law. Also, some were carried out with force. Many refugees who fled to Cameroon in February 2008 are now unable to return to N'Djamena because their homes were among those demolished. They have no choice other than to stay in refugee camps in Cameroon. The evictions have created chaos in the lives of all who were forced from their homes.

Satellite images acquired by Amnesty International show that about 3,700 structures were destroyed in N'Djamena within a 12-month period.



A N'Djamena community in January 2008 (left) and in November 2008 (right)
© 2009 DigitalGlobe (Image Source Quickbird Satellite)

For more satellite images, please see [Broken Homes, Broken Lives](#), AI Index: AFR 20/005/2009.

Please write to the president of Chad, in French or your own language.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Ask him to stop evicting people with force, and to pass and enforce a law that prohibits forced evictions.
3. Request that the tens of thousands already affected have emergency shelter and access to adequate clean water, sanitation, and health services.

His Excellency Idriss Déby Itno
President of Chad
Présidence de la République
B.P. 74
N'Djamena, Chad

Start your letter: Your Excellency
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 235 251 4501

The Chadian Constitution

Article 41 Private property is inviolable and sacred. No one can be dispossessed except for a duly verified case of public interest and with fair and advance compensation.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Article 11 The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right...



COLOMBIA

Peace Community families still in danger

What would you do if you lived in the middle of a war that put you and your family in constant danger?

Over 200 families in the rural hamlets of San José de Apartadó in northwest Colombia decided to form a “peace community” to try to escape the bloodshed caused by decades of armed conflict between the government, its paramilitary allies and guerrilla groups.

Residents of the Peace Community refuse to bear arms and will not provide information or logistical support to any of the warring parties. They want all the combatants to stay off their land and leave them in peace.



Painted stones in the Peace Community honour residents who were killed. Some are young children.

Threats continue.

© Simone Bruno

would skin his face and gouge his eyes. Then the soldiers released both of them. On 26 August, armed men stopped three community members and took them to a nearby paramilitary base, where they were tied up, interrogated and told that the Peace Community was the biggest “problem” in the region. The paramilitaries subjected them to mock executions before letting them go the next day.

The Colombian government has a responsibility to protect the civilians who live in San José de Apartadó, but it is clearly failing to do so.

The combatants are suspicious of the community’s position. Each side accuses the community of helping the other side. Since they created a community of peace in 1997, over 170 residents, including young children, have been killed or “disappeared.” Colombia’s army and its paramilitary allies committed the vast majority of these crimes. The guerrillas carried out the remainder.

The situation remains extremely dangerous and community members regularly receive threats. Earlier this year, soldiers threatened to rape a 15-year-old girl, and held a machete to the cheek of the man with her. They told him they

The failing in the State’s duty to provide protection is very serious. Equally serious is the lack of results achieved during the criminal investigations initiated after these crimes took place.

– Colombia’s Constitutional Court, Dec 2007

Would you like to receive Amnesty’s information on Colombia regularly?
Contact Kathy Price at kprice@amnesty.ca

Please write to Colombia's President.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Ask him to make a public statement calling on all parties in the armed conflict to respect the right of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó not to be drawn into the conflict.
3. Ask the President to make sure that protection measures, agreed to by the Peace Community itself, are put in place.

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Bogotá, Colombia

Start your letter: Dear President Uribe
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 57 1 337 5890

Make your appeal stronger by sending copies to:

The Honourable Peter Kent
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Americas)
110 Justice Building, House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Jaime Girón Duarte
Ambassador for Colombia
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7

Email: kentp@parl.gc.ca
Postage: free
Fax: (613) 992-0887

Email: embajada@embajadacolombia.ca
Postage: \$.54
Fax: (613) 230-4416



Let the people of San José de Apartadó know they have your support. Mail a short message to
Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó
AA 243 de Apartadó
Antioquia, Colombia

Use any type of card or paper.

You may mention Amnesty International.

Write your own message in English or use this message in Spanish:

*Estimados amigos y amigas de la Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó:
Con este mensaje queremos hacerles llegar nuestra solidaridad y acompañarles en el duro
camino de su comunidad como Comunidad de Paz. Reciban un cordial saludo.*

Translation: *Dear friends of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó:
Through this message we would like to offer you our solidarity and accompany you on the difficult
journey that your community is making as a Peace Community. Best wishes*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 12: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to protection of the law against such interference or attacks.



EGYPT

Defend a blogger's right to freedom of expression

Karim Amer is a 25-year-old law student — but you will not find him at Cairo's Al-Azhar University. On 6 November 2006, he began a four-year jail term. His “crime” was to publish material on the internet that was critical of both Islam and of Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak.

Amnesty International considers Karim Amer a prisoner of conscience, jailed only for applying his right to express himself, peacefully, through his blogging activity. The United Nations Human Rights Council agrees. Its experts concluded that Egyptian authorities have detained him unlawfully for his online criticisms.

Some Muslims might take offense at Karim's views on Islam. However, this does not justify prosecution and imprisonment under Egypt's Penal Code. The offenses in the Code that relate to insulting the President of Egypt and to publishing greatly limit freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The Code provides for jail time for anyone who publishes materials that provoke attacks against a community or “disturbs national peace.”



Karim Amer © Amnesty International

Amnesty International is further worried that the persecution of Karim Amer threatens other Egyptian bloggers. The internet has emerged as a major forum for expressing views critical of Egyptian authorities and exposing human rights abuses such as ill-treatment in police stations.

Karim told his lawyers that on 24 October 2007, a prisoner and a guard punched and kicked him, resulting in bruises and a broken tooth. They took him to a disciplinary cell, bound his arms and legs and beat him. He existed in solitary confinement with little water and one daily meal until 7 November 2007 when they moved him back to the section where they hold petty criminals. No one conducted an investigation.

One year ago, they moved Karim to the political prisoners' section. He is allowed TV, radio, newspapers, and exercise time. He is also allowed longer visits from his lawyers but in fact authorities have denied them access to Karim since March 2009.

Please write to Egypt's president.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Acknowledge that Karim Amer's blogs offended him and some Muslims but that the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression demands his release.
3. Ask him to launch an independent and exhaustive investigation into Karim's claims of ill-treatment. Provide a detail or two about them in your letter.

President Hosni Mubarak
'Abedine Palace
Cairo, Egypt

Start your letter: Dear President Mubarak
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 20 22 390 1998 or 011 20 22 795 8016
Email: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg



Send a greeting to Karim! Please use his full name when you address the envelope.

Abdel Karim Nabil Soliman Amer
Bog Al-Arab Prison
Alexandria, Egypt

« I oppose everything that can restrain anyone's freedom of expression...
Terrorizing me, ousting me from university, imprisoning me, none of that will affect my spirit. »
Extract of letter from Karim Amer,
4 September 2007

Use any type of card or paper **except religious cards/greetings.**

Write in Arabic, English, or your own language.

You may mention Amnesty International and include your return address.

Sample letter in Arabic:

ميرك يزيزع
كحارس قال طيلجأ نم لم عن نحن و قريباً كتي رح درتست نأ ينمتأ
أيضاً تبلطدق و كحارس قال طيلع هثأ يرصملا سيئرلا إلباطخ تلسرأ دقل
نحس لاب اهل تضرعت يتلأ ةلماعملا ءوس يف قيقحتلا

Dear Karim, I hope that you will soon be free. We are working towards your release.

I have sent a letter to the Egyptian President asking him to release you. I have also asked for an investigation of the way you have been ill-treated in prison.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.



GREECE: Demand justice for a migrant worker

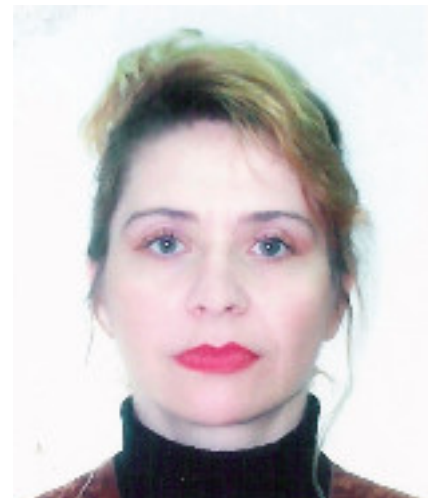
One year ago, Konstantina Kuneva was a healthy migrant worker employed as a cleaner in Athens. Today she is in hospital awaiting more operations after a man threw sulphuric acid in her face.

Konstantina is a single parent with one child and had been teaching history in Bulgaria. She moved to Greece in 2001 to earn money for her son's medical needs. While working as a cleaner, she took part in trade union activities, demanding basic rights for workers. Eventually she became Secretary General of the Attica Union of Cleaners and Domestic Workers. Her campaigning included criticism of employers for delaying salary payments for up to five months and for failing to pay social insurance for their workers. As a result, her employer gave her unfavourable shift hours, she faced pressure to quit, and someone started threatening her over the phone.

As Konstantina returned home on 22 December 2008, two men approached her. One tossed sulphuric acid at her. She lost sight in one eye and has limited vision in the other. The attack also badly damaged her vocal chords and trachea. She remained in a coma for several days and continues to be hospitalized.

The police launched an official investigation into the attack. However, human rights groups criticized the first stages for focusing on Konstantina's private life instead of seriously considering that her union activities could be a motive for the attack. Her lawyers believe that the investigation was flawed, due to

- the delays of the police in investigating the case,
- the fact that they did not investigate the area where the attack took place, and
- the lack of testimonies from anyone but Konstantina Kuneva.



Konstantina Kuneva before the acid attack © Private

In May 2009, the Deputy Minister of the Interior received a petition containing 22,000 signatures, many from Amnesty International members. He committed to speeding up a thorough and impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. One month later, however, the judge investigator decided to end inquiries. The case is now with the Prosecutor. Konstantina Kuneva's lawyers fear that he will close it instead of sending it back to the same judge, or an alternate, for further investigation.

Please write to the Greek Prosecutor's office.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Urge him to organize a complete, independent investigation into the attack against Konstantina Kuneva that will bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure that she receives compensation.
3. Ask him to protect other human rights defenders and trade union members from similar attacks by heeding existing laws on workers' rights.

Director
Prosecutor's Office of the First Instance Courts of Athens
Building No. 16, Proin Sholi Evelpidon
Athens 10167
Greece

Start your letter: Dear Director
Postage: \$1.65



Lift the spirits of Konstantina Kuneva by sending her a greeting at

Ergatiko Kendro Athinon
Office No. 320
3rd Septemvriou Street 48b
Athens 10433, Greece

Use any type of card or paper.
Write in Greek, Bulgarian or your own language.
You may mention Amnesty International and include your return address

Sample message in Greek:

Οι σκέψεις μας είναι μαζί σας και στέλνουμε τις θερμότερες ευχές μας σε εσάς και την οικογένειά σας.
(We are thinking of you and send our best regards for yourself and your family.)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

Article 23

Everyone has the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests.



INDIA

Bhopal 25 years on: It's time to keep the promises!

It was almost midnight on 2-3 December 1984 in Bhopal, India. Union Carbide's pesticide factory began spewing gas, waking people in nearby homes. They fled with burning eyes and unable to breathe. Half a million people were exposed that night. More than 7,000 died within days. Another 20,000 have died in the intervening 25 years as a direct result of the massive leak of toxic chemicals.

Today 100,000 survivors continue to suffer from and succumb to gas-related health problems. They lack adequate medical care and still await adequate compensation.

The factory is located in the middle of poor neighbourhoods. The leak has driven almost everyone deeper into poverty. Thousands lost their jobs or got too sick to work. Many who died were the main wage earner in the family. Some families also lost their animals, a key source of income.

The Bhopal disaster is an example of extreme negligence by a company. Years earlier, the company had been warned that the plant was dangerously unsafe. The plant stored huge quantities of methyl isocyanate, a highly reactive and dangerous chemical. Union Carbide denied that methyl isocyanate is toxic. It has yet to name the all the reactive products that leaked with it, leaving medical professionals unable to treat people properly.

Union Carbide left India, abandoning the plant and its barrels of chemicals. This created a second disaster. Chemicals seeped into the ground, polluting the groundwater. Thousands more now have debilitating illnesses. Many did not even live in Bhopal during the 1984 disaster. Medical conditions include twisted limbs, fused fingers, cleft palates and severe brain disorders. Reproductive problems include stillbirths and gynaecological disorders. Girls start menstruating late and women enter menopause early. Boys experience delayed growth. Young men often reject a "Bhopal bride". They fear future health problems or birth defects in children. This affects the social and economic security of young women.



Boys collect water in Bhopal in 2003. The government paints contaminated wells red.

© Rachna Dhingra

In 1989, the Indian government settled with Union Carbide for \$470 million but without consulting the survivors. The amount is not sufficient for the number of people affected, nor for the seriousness and duration of their medical, economic, and social problems. In addition, the settlement covers the people directly affected by the gas leak of December 1984 but not the people who were later recognized to be suffering from the water contamination that resulted.

Legal action has so far proved unsuccessful, but has not been abandoned. A civil case at a U.S. federal court has just reopened. The case seeks a thorough cleanup of the contaminated site, as well as compensation and medical monitoring for the water-affected survivors. The criminal case began on 7 December 1984 in India with the arrest of Union Carbide's CEO, Warren Anderson. When authorities freed him on bail, he immediately fled India. Despite several orders to show up for trial, he has never returned. A Bhopal court issued a warrant for his extradition from the US in 2002, and again in August 2009 but so far the Indian government has not activated it

In both 2006 and 2008, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed to the survivors' demands after they marched 800 kilometres from Bhopal to Delhi. He promised that his government would create an Empowered Commission to ensure that they receive clean water, and adequate medical, social and economic rehabilitation. He has yet to keep this promise.

Please write to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Ask him to create the promised Empowered Commission to provide adequate medical, social and economic rehabilitation to survivors and their children.
3. Insist that his government take urgent and effective action to
 - clean up the factory site and
 - make sure that those responsible face justice.

Dr. Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister of India
Room No. 148 B, South Block
New Delhi 110 00
India

Start your letter: Your Excellency
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 91 11 2301 6857

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 3: Everyone has the right to **life**, liberty and **security of person**.

Article 7: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection before the law.

Article 25: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family including...medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability... or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.



OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY: Protest house demolitions

Palestinian residents in the Hadidiya and Humsa hamlets of the West Bank may soon have no homes. Most of them are children. The Israeli army could force them to leave “with immediate effect.”

That has already happened to a nearby community. In June 2009, the army destroyed the homes and animal pens of 18 families. The army also took away the trailer the community used for transporting water from 20 kilometers away and the tank for storing it (there is a well close to the village but only Israeli settlers are allowed to use it). If the army evicts the families in Hadidiya and Humsa, they too could be without shelter, a source of water, or the goats and sheep whose milk and cheese they sell to make a living.

Although they are isolated, the villagers are determined to remain. They lived there long before the Israeli army occupied their land in 1967. But life in Hadidiya and Humsa is becoming so difficult that families are fighting to survive.



Palestinian children outside their homes in Humsa that may be demolished © Amnesty International

- The government has refused Palestinians building permits. This forces them to live in tents and shacks that protect them poorly from harsh desert weather.
- While they watch Israel give its settlers electricity and water for their gardens and swimming pools, the Palestinians are not allowed to dig new wells or connect to the electricity grid.
- Palestinian parents have to travel several kilometres to buy small quantities of water for cooking and basic needs. Their children must walk along a dirt road to another village to go to school.
- They watch Israel taking their land to build Israeli settlements. This, despite international law that forbids occupying powers from settling their own citizens in the territories they occupy. International law also obliges Israel to respect the rights of the local Palestinian population to non-discrimination, to property, and to an adequate standard of living.

The residents of Humsa and Hadidiya say that when international attention on their situation is high, the threat of demolitions decreases.

Please write to Israel's Prime Minister.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Ask him to give Palestinians the same access to basic services -- like shelter, land, water, and electricity -- as the Israelis enjoy.
3. Ask him to stop destroying houses and evicting families in the occupied West Bank until the government rewrites the law to agree with international standards.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Hakiryia, Jerusalem 91950
Israel

Start your letter: Dear Prime Minister
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 972 2 566 4838 or 011 972 2 649 6659
Email: bnetanyahu@knesset.gov.il

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 17

Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...



NEPAL:

Protect health advisor Rita Mahato from violence

Rita Mahato should be receiving support for her work with the Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) in Nepal's Siraha District. Instead, she receives threats and she fears for her life.



Rita Mahato © Dixie

WOREC investigates and documents cases of sexual violence against women, and provides health and legal support to victims. When police do not respond to attacks, Rita and her colleagues register the cases with them and help arrest the attackers by documenting the incidents.

WOREC staff regularly face discrimination and

humiliation for raising the issue of domestic sexual violence and promoting women's rights. Some Nepalese defenders of women's human rights have even been killed.

Rita and other WOREC staff have received threats because of their work. In June 2007, for example, more than 60 men arrived at the WOREC offices. They threatened Rita Mahato and other staff with rape and death, and insisted that they leave the village within five days. In the same month, about 20 people threw bricks at the WOREC office for two hours. Police received reports of these incidents and requests for protection, but have yet to take any action.

Rita continues to feel vulnerable and fears for her life.

Please write to Nepal's Inspector General of Police.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Ask him to arrange for an independent and complete investigation into the continuing threats against Rita Mahato and the staff of the Women's Rehabilitation Centre.
3. Urge him to develop a national plan of action to implement the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders that enables defenders to carry out their work without fear.

Ramesh Chand Thakuri
Police Headquarters
GPO Box 407, Naxal
Kathmandu, Nepal

Start your letter: Dear Inspector General
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 977 14 415 593
Email: info@nepalpolice.gov.np



Let Rita Mahato and WOREC staff know they have your support. Write to WOREC
P.O. Box 13233, Balkumari
Lalitpur, Nepal

You may

- use any type of card or paper **except religious cards/greetings**
- write in Nepalese or your own language
- mention Amnesty International and include your return address

Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Article 11

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to the lawful exercise of his or her occupation or profession.

Article 12

The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.



PARAGUAY

Indigenous people dying from government inaction

Two Indigenous communities have lived in makeshift settlements beside a highway for more than 15 years — and people are dying as a result. Why is this happening?

The Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa* communities have been denied access to their traditional lands since private owners bought the land 20 years ago. Around 300 Yakye Axa make their home on a barren strip between the Pozo Colorado-Concepción highway and a wire fence. The fence marks the boundary of a large cattle ranch that has absorbed their land. Around 500 Sawhoyamaxa live 15 kilometers away.

Without their own land, community members have been unable to hunt, fish, gather honey, or continue other activities that support their traditional way of life. The lack of work in the area means that they have been forced to rely increasingly on food aid from state agencies and private institutions. The state's failure to provide access to effective healthcare has caused deaths. In the last four years, 33 people in the communities have died from preventable and treatable illnesses.



Belén Galarza outside the home she shares with 10 Sawhoyamaxa family members
© Amnesty International

After both communities tried — without success — to protect their rights in the Paraguayan courts, they took their cases to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In separate decisions in 2005 and 2006, the Court found that the government had violated their rights to judicial protection, to property, and to life. The court then ordered the return of their lands. The deadlines set by the court have now passed and the communities still have no access to their lands.

The Inter-American Court also ordered Paraguayan authorities to deliver regular supplies of clean drinking water and basic food to the communities while they wait for the return of their lands. Between November 2008 and May 2009, only a small delivery of food had arrived. Health workers visit the communities once a month but they do not provide healthcare between visits.

*In Enxet, Yakye Axa means *Island of palms*. Sawhoyamaxa means *From the place where the coconuts have run out*.

Please write to President Lugo.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Remind him that he has a legal obligation to comply with the 2005 and 2006 rulings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to return traditional lands to the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa Indigenous communities.
3. Insist that, until the communities can move back to their own land, the government must provide access to food, clean drinking water, and other basics for survival. Medical care must include a trained health worker, a medical clinic, and a way to communicate with the local hospital in emergencies.

Excelentísimo Don Fernando Armindo Lugo Méndez
Presidente Constitucional de la República del Paraguay
Palacio de López
El Paraguayo Independiente entre Ayolas y O'Leary
CP 1220
Asunción, Paraguay

Start your letter: Dear President
Postage: \$1.65
Fax: 011 595 21 414 0201



Let the Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa people know you support them. Send a greeting to:
Yakye Axa or Sawhoyamaxa
A/c Tierraviva
Manuel Domínguez N° 1073 e/ EEUU y Brasil
Asunción, Paraguay

Fax it to 011 595 21 202 039 or 011 595 21 209 092 or mail your message at \$1.65.

Use any type of card or paper **except religious cards/greeting.**

You may mention Amnesty International and include your return address.

You may write your own message in English or use one of these in Spanish:

Quiero expresar nuestro apoyo para sus reclamos. (I would like to express our support for your struggle.)

Quiero que sepan que hay mucha gente en Canadá que está apoyando su lucha, contando a la gente sobre el incumplimiento de las dos sentencias de la Corte y expresando nuestro preocupación a las autoridades paraguayas. (I would like you to know that many people in Canada are supporting your struggle, telling people about the lack of compliance with the two Court judgements, and expressing our concern with the Paraguayan authorities.)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate to the health and well-being of himself and of his family...



SIERRA LEONE

Access to health services: a matter of life and death

Yerie Marah was just 22 when she died in November 2008, the day after giving birth to a baby girl. The baby died 40 days later. Yerie's husband told Amnesty International, "It is because of poverty that these things are happening."

Yerie's story is one of the daily tragedies facing families in Sierra Leone, where maternal mortality is among the highest in the world. Thousands of women and girls die every year from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. If these people were living elsewhere, such complications would be treatable, but because they live in Sierra Leone, they do not have access to quality health care.

For many women and girls in Sierra Leone, health care facilities are too far from their homes. Too few hospitals have emergency obstetric care facilities with the result that many women do not have access to emergency services when they need them.



Shocking statistics suggest that one of these eight pregnant women in Mannah village, northern Sierra Leone, will die in childbirth.

© Amnesty International

Where services do exist, cost is a barrier.

Families are often expected to pay for admission to a health centre, for supplies and medicines, and for surgery and other medical services. Many health care workers are not regularly paid, and health centres do not have enough staff, resources, or even supplies, which means that families carry the burden of cost.

Because of the high cost of health care services, many families put off important decisions about whether to go to the hospital or health centre when there are complications. Those who go may have treatment delayed because they do not have the money to pay for it. The result of these delays can be deadly.

On 23 September 2009, the government announced a policy to provide free health care for pregnant and lactating women, and for children under 5. The policy should take effect in April 2010. The government made a similar announcement in 2002 but the policy was never put into practice.

Sierra Leone is recovering from 11 years of civil war that ended in 2002. It will take time, help from international donors, and commitment from the government to rebuild an under-resourced health care system. “Money alone will not solve the problem,” said Amnesty International’s Secretary General Irene Khan. “The lives of women and girls will only be saved when the health system is properly managed and the government is held to account.”

The high rate of maternal mortality is not normal. It is not acceptable. Every woman in Sierra Leone has the right to a safe delivery. It is the responsibility of the government to make health care available and accessible to all.

Please write to Sierra Leone’s president.

1. Describe who you are.
2. Express concern at the high death rate of women in childbirth, welcome the new free health care policy, and urge him to implement it effectively.
3. Urge him, as a matter of priority, to
 - provide a core level of emergency obstetric care across the country,
 - improve supplies of medicines and medical equipment, and
 - pay medical staff adequate salaries.

Address your letter to: President of Sierra Leone Ernest Bai Koroma

Start your letter: Dear President

Mail your letters, however, to the national office of Amnesty International in Canada. Amnesty International in Sierra Leone will deliver them in early 2010 to President Koroma along with messages from other Amnesty International members around the world.

Sierra Leone action
Amnesty International
312 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa ON K1N 1H9

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Article 12

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.
2. ...States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.