

A YEAR OF CAMPAIGNING

"They carried guns all the time. I was afraid of the guns. Actually, I was in constant fear." These are the words of Fereh Musu Conteh, who was abducted by an armed group during the conflict in Sierra Leone when she was just 13 years old.

"When there are guns, there are more victims," said Malya, a woman from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, describing the level of violence in her neighbourhood.

Gun violence afflicts countries around the world — armed conflict and violent crime claim the lives of men, women and children every day. AI is part of a worldwide coalition campaigning for a global Arms Trade Treaty in order to prevent the proliferation and misuse of arms and so reduce the number of victims. In 2006, activists achieved a major victory when the UN voted overwhelmingly to start work on a treaty — a goal many thought unrealistic when the campaign started.

The success of the Control Arms campaign shows what can be achieved with determination, clarity and imagination.

AI's uniqueness among human rights organizations is its strategic channelling of the passion and outrage of ordinary people around the world. AI's members and supporters exert influence on governments, armed political groups, companies and intergovernmental bodies. They change the lives of individuals — of victims and survivors of human rights abuses, of human rights activists and defenders, and even of the abusers.

The activism of AI's 2.2 million members and supporters, working alongside international and local partners, converts AI's research into a force for change. Activists confront governments, other institutions and individuals, not only through letters, emails

and petitions but by mobilizing public pressure through street protests, vigils and direct lobbying. Thousands of AI members respond to Urgent Action appeals on behalf of individuals at immediate risk. Publicity through the news media and online takes AI's message swiftly and in a range of languages to millions more.

AI members invent creative and innovative forms of activism, both online and on the streets. In 2006, for example, AI Paraguay organized "toy gun swaps" in the run-up to Christmas, offering new toys to children in exchange for toy weapons, and street theatre to persuade parents not to buy them. AI Morocco carried out a survey on poverty and government responsibility, and AI Australia sought the public's view on the country's new anti-terror laws. AI Norway prepared to launch its online "pledge banking", where activists pledge to undertake a campaigning activity if enough others join in.

The key areas of focus for AI in 2006 were Control Arms; Stop Violence against Women, in particular domestic violence; torture and other abuses in the "war on terror"; the need for a peacekeeping force to protect civilians in Darfur, Sudan; and the conflict between Israeli forces and Hizbullah fighters based in Lebanon.

Among many other country and region-specific campaigns, AI focused on forced evictions in Africa. In countries such as Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan and Zimbabwe, evictions are often carried out illegally, with excessive and sometimes lethal force, and without provision of adequate alternative accommodation. Forced evictions disproportionately affect people living in poverty and often lead to a wide range of other human rights being

denied (*Africa: Forced evictions reach crisis levels*, AI Index: AFR 01/009/2006).

Successes continued in AI's global campaign for a world free of executions. In June, the Philippines became the 88th country to totally abolish the death penalty. This development was particularly welcome in the Asia-Pacific region where a disproportionately high proportion of the world's executions take place. In July, AI played a role in bringing together human rights groups, activists, lawyers and parliamentarians from 21 countries to form the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) as a united regional voice against the death penalty. In Europe and Central Asia, after vigorous AI campaigning in recent years, Moldova amended its Constitution to formalize its complete abolition of the death penalty and ratified international treaties that require abolition. Kyrgyzstan signed into law a new Constitution that no longer included, and therefore no longer authorized, death as a punishment.

In 2006 at least 1,544 people were executed in 25 countries worldwide. At least 3,861 people were sentenced to death in 55 countries. The true numbers are believed to be considerably higher. By far the majority of executions – 90 per cent – were carried out in just five countries: China, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the USA. Countries that executed people convicted of crimes committed while they were under 18 were Iran and Pakistan.

THE INDIVIDUAL AT THE CORE

At the heart of all AI's campaigns is the individual – as the victim and survivor of human rights abuses, as the partner in the defence of human rights, and as the activist speaking out and working with and for other individuals. Whether global or local, aimed at governments or multilateral institutions, focusing on one person in danger of torture or on a police service that needs training in responding effectively to domestic violence, all campaigns are generated and fired by the individual at their centre in need of protection or support.

The global connection between individuals is a motivating force behind all AI campaigns. It lies behind much of the activism of new human rights groups working at local, grassroots and community level. Such human rights defenders may be both victims and activists, struggling to achieve their own rights as well as those of their family or community. Working with such human rights defenders is as much about seeking structural changes to create the space in which people can organize and protest as it is about helping the individuals themselves.

Campaigning can achieve real improvements in the lives of individuals. Individual members of AI forge global links of solidarity with survivors, human rights defenders and their families. The human face in AI's work inspires and mobilizes members, and attracts wider support in society and from governments. AI presents the cases of individuals not as advocates working solely for one beneficiary, but to benefit all individuals experiencing similar abuses, to shift public opinion or to focus attention on mass violations, and to win changes in policy and practice. Offering that human context demonstrates starkly to governments and the public the consequences of failing to protect human rights.

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CONTROL ARMS

A UN vote in October marked a massive victory for AI and its partners in the Control Arms campaign, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). After three years of campaigning around the world and three weeks of concerted campaigning in New York before the vote, 139 governments were persuaded to vote in favour of a UN resolution to start work on an Arms Trade Treaty. In December, 153 governments voted for the resolution's formal adoption by the UN General Assembly, with only one state – the USA – voting against.

Under the resolution, the UN must collect states' views on the feasibility, scope and parameters of a treaty, then in 2008 set up a group of experts to establish the basis of a comprehensive, legally binding treaty. As a direct result of the campaigning before the vote, the UN resolution contains an explicit reference to governments' obligations under human rights and humanitarian law. While AI is eager for rapid advances, in UN terms progress has been extraordinarily swift. The resolution could be a key first step towards a worldwide ban on transfers of arms that devastate the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

■ More than a million people around the world posted pictures of themselves on the Control Arms website for the Million Faces Petition. Supporters ranged from Archbishop Desmond Tutu to the entire French football team. The millionth face was that of Julius Arile, an athlete working for peace in Kenya, who presented the petition to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in New York in June. To lobby governments before the UN debate, the Control Arms campaign published *Arms without borders* (AI Index: POL 34/006/2006), a report on the globalized arms trade.

■ As part of the "100 days Countdown" before the crucial General Assembly vote, representatives from 70 AI Sections around the world travelled to New York to campaign and lobby a UN Review Conference on small arms and light weapons. Control Arms activists lobbied with a campaign report, *The AK-47: The world's favourite killing machine* (AI Index: ACT 30/011/2006), and a booklet entitled *Compilation of global principles for arms transfers* (AI Index: POL 34/004/2006) published by AI and its partner organizations. Although agreement at the Conference was stalled by a small group of governments led by the USA, the UN Secretary-General in his opening statement endorsed the call for an Arms Trade Treaty, as did many governments.

Other campaigning initiatives in 2006 targeted the export of arms to areas of the world in conflict where human rights abuses and war crimes are rife.

■ In January, AI published testimonies from individuals in Haiti (AI Index: AMR 36/001/2006) and during the conflict in Sierra Leone (AI Index: AFR 51/001/2006). Conflicts and mass killings in Sierra Leone and neighbouring states in West Africa were sustained by the supply of weapons funded by the illegal sale of diamonds. In Haiti armed violence has spread from armed political groups to criminal gangs that kill and rape hundreds of people every year with arms smuggled from neighbouring countries, including the USA.

■ Developing countries now absorb more than two thirds of world defence imports, increasingly using private contractors in diverse supply chains. Just before the UN Review Conference, AI and Transarms, the Research Centre for the Logistics of Arms Transfers, published a report in May, *Dead on time: Arms transportation, brokering and the threat to human rights* (AI Index: ACT 30/008/2006). The report documented unaccounted arms flights from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Iraq by the US Department of Defense, as well as shipments from Brazil to Saudi Arabia and from China to Liberia using foreign brokers and shippers while disregarding patterns of human rights abuse by the recipients.

■ While international debate has focused on the transfer of nuclear or long-range missile technology to countries such as Iran, North Korea and Pakistan, the routine export of conventional weapons and small arms that contribute to human rights violations and armed violence has received far less attention. In the July-August conflict involving Israel and Lebanon, Israeli forces used aircraft, bombs, missiles, cluster and other munitions supplied particularly by the US, while Hizbullah attacked northern Israel with Katyusha and other rockets said to have been produced with the assistance of Syria and Iran. An AI report on China's role in arming conflicts and sustaining human rights abuses in such countries as Myanmar, Nepal, South Africa and Sudan was published in June (*People's Republic of China: Sustaining conflict and human rights abuses*, AI Index: ASA 17/030/2006).

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Domestic violence was a focus for AI campaigning. AI's campaign was part of a wider worldwide movement to address violence against women as a human rights issue. The UN Secretary-General published an in-depth study of violence against women in all its forms in October. The report called on states to secure gender equality, bring laws and practices in line with international standards, collect data to strengthen policy and planning, and allocate adequate resources and funding. In November, AI members welcomed a Council of Europe campaign on domestic violence, and urged member states to deliver on the campaign's goals of abolishing discriminatory laws, strengthening services for survivors and challenging social prejudices.

AI holds the state responsible when it takes inadequate measures to protect women from domestic violence – by not introducing or implementing specific laws or procedures, not providing specialist training or health care, or not making available or supporting shelters or other services. If a state does not make sufficient effort to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, then it shares responsibility for the abuses.

■ AI called on governments to implement its new 14-Point Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, which calls on governments to protect the physical and mental wellbeing of women who have been abused. It insists that government policies, practices and laws must not discriminate against women, and calls on governments to consult and work closely with women victims and survivors, and with organizations with experience of addressing domestic violence.

■ The need for a place of safety was the focus of AI's 16 Days of Activism to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November. Through 16 web-based appeal cases, AI urged governments to set up and fund shelters for women fleeing violence in the home. Some governments provide no shelters or support for women facing domestic abuse, such as in

Saudi Arabia. In other countries, for example Belgium or Mongolia, official support is sporadic or insufficient. AI highlighted the particular difficulties of migrant women in Denmark, at risk of losing residency rights if they leave an abusive marriage, and of Native American and Alaska Native women in the USA who cannot access shelters that provide culturally appropriate forms of help.

■ In August, the Director General of the State Police in Albania reported that he had directed the police to implement AI's recommendations published in March in *Albania: Violence against women in the family – "It's not her shame"* (AI Index: EUR 11/002/2006). AI had called for the police to treat seriously and investigate reports of family violence, to protect women complainants and witnesses, to facilitate the work of women's organizations, and to discipline police officers who "neglect or treat with indifference" complaints of violence against women.

■ In *Sierra Leone: Women face human rights abuses in the informal legal sector* (AI Index: AFR 51/002/2006), published in May, AI showed how powers exercised by traditional rulers through customary courts can deprive women of rights. Failures by police to respond to appeals for help and by local courts to exercise their jurisdiction frequently leave women at the mercy of discriminatory customary laws.

■ Failure to tackle high levels of sexual violence reflect social and cultural attitudes that trivialize the crimes and entrench discrimination against women, AI reported in June in *Sexual violence against women and girls in Jamaica: "Just a little sex"* (AI Index: AMR 38/002/2006). Jamaican law leaves women without the protection of the law in cases of marital rape, incest or sexual harassment, and in court, women's testimony is explicitly given less weight than that of men.

■ The threat of sexual violence in the home and community affects women's ability to travel to market or to work and to access health and education services, AI reported in September in *Papua New Guinea: Violence against women – not inevitable, never*

acceptable! (AI Index: ASA 34/002/2006). In meetings with AI, police and other officials showed little understanding of the state's obligations to protect women.

■ In October, Hamda Fahad Jassem Al-Thani was allowed to join her husband, and thanked AI for its appeals. "I ask you to help end my suffering and to help me return to my husband,

whom I chose entirely of my own accord, this being the most fundamental of my God-given rights, as enshrined in international human rights conventions," she had said to AI. A member of the ruling family in Qatar, she had been abducted from Egypt by the state security services and detained in

secret following her marriage without her family's consent in 2002.

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'WAR ON TERROR'

In its international campaign against abuses in the "war on terror", AI exposed and denounced hundreds of cases of torture and other grave violations of human rights claimed by states to be a necessary response to security threats. AI also strongly condemned deliberate attacks on civilians and indiscriminate attacks by armed groups.

■ AI convened a two-day gathering of human rights organizations from the Middle East in Lebanon in January. The participants concluded that no detainees should be transferred from one country to another on the basis of mere diplomatic assurances that they would not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated after transfer, and that memorandums of understanding to that effect between the UK government and governments in the Middle East and North Africa undermined the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment.

■ AI and other human rights groups submitted a brief to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Ramzy v. the Netherlands*, seeking to uphold the absolute prohibition in

law against transferring a person to a state where they risk torture.

■ The US programme of renditions – the secret transfer of individuals from one country to another, bypassing judicial and administrative due process – was analysed in April in *USA: Below the radar – Secret flights to torture and "disappearance"* (AI Index: AMR 51/051/2006). Since 2001, hundreds of terror suspects have been transferred to states where physical and psychological brutality and coercion feature prominently in interrogations. Many detainees have been subjected to enforced disappearance, a crime under international law.

■ Three Yemenis detained for more than 18 months by the USA or at its behest, then for over nine months without charge in Yemen – Muhammad Abdullah al Assad, Muhammad Faraj Bashmilah and Salah Nasser Salim 'Ali Qaru – provided unique insights into the workings of covert US-run detention centres known as "black sites". AI members campaigned for their trial or release, and AI delegates observed the trial that eventually took place in February 2006, leading to the final release of all three men in March.

■ The active involvement of European states in US rendition flights, or their denial of any knowledge about them, was spotlighted in AI's June report, *Partners in crime: Europe's role in US renditions* (AI Index: EUR 01/008/2006). AI lobbied Council of Europe (CoE) member states to investigate these abuses themselves and to cooperate fully with CoE investigations, and called for CoE guidelines on controls of domestic and foreign secret services and of transiting air traffic.

■ AI France created an online viral campaign to spread the message against renditions, also working closely with rap artist Leeroy Kesiah (www.terrorairlines.com). AIUSA hosted an online discussion in August after Peter Bauer and other former interrogators told the US Congress that torture and other ill-treatment were unnecessary to win the "war on terror". In December, AI Jordan campaigned with cartoonist Khaldoun Gharaibeh and former detainee Khaled Al-

Asmar for the closure of the US detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

■ In *Terror and counter-terror: Defending our human rights* (AI Index: ACT 40/009/2006), published in August, AI detailed how the widespread backlash against human rights in the "war on terror" has been vigorously challenged by AI and other activists around the world. The report drew attention to the conflicts and other contexts in which human rights abuses are ignored as states concentrate on national security issues.

■ "He is now again in the circle of his family. Their joy at embracing their lost son again is indescribable," said the lawyer for Murat Kurnaz, a Turkish national and resident of Germany released from Guantánamo in August 2006. Murat Kurnaz was detained without charge or trial for nearly five years before the German authorities acted on his behalf following intense and sustained pressure by his family, lawyers and AI members.

SUDAN: CIVILIANS UNPROTECTED

Despite a peace agreement in May, fighting escalated in Darfur as the government and the only other signatory, a rebel armed faction, launched a new offensive against the non-signatory armed groups. Cross-border attacks by government-backed Janjawid militias took the devastation of war and attendant human rights abuses into Chad, threatening growing destabilization in the region. Hundreds of civilians were believed killed and tens of thousands forced from their homes in direct and targeted attacks by government and allied forces. AI's campaigning focused on the need for international peacekeepers to protect the civilians of Darfur and eastern Chad despite the resistance of the Sudanese government.

■ Denied access to Darfur by the Sudanese authorities, AI delegates visited Chad in May, July and November. In camps in eastern Chad, they heard harrowing accounts from refugees from Darfur and from Chadians attacked as vast areas of eastern Chad were depopulated in cross-border raids (*Chad/Sudan: Sowing the seeds of Darfur – Ethnic targeting in Chad by Janjawid militias from Sudan*, AI Index: AFR

20/006/2006). In November AI delegates recorded the deaths of over 500 individuals in eastern Chad – the numbers killed as attacks continued were undoubtedly many times higher. They went to destroyed villages and spoke to the survivors of attacks and rapes. Numerous witnesses testified to the failure of the Chadian government to deploy its troops to protect civilians, even those stationed near the scene of attacks. AI renewed calls to the UN Security Council to deploy an international peacekeeping force in eastern Chad.

■ In March the African Union called for the peacekeeping duties of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in Darfur to be transferred to a UN force. AMIS forces lacked equipment and funding, and the Sudanese government had restricted their activity. In July, AI produced a briefing on the resources, authority and mandate that a peacekeeping force needed, and in December developed an *Agenda for effective protection of civilians in Darfur* (AI Index: AFR 54/084/2006).

■ AI members protested at attacks on individuals and communities by the government and allied forces in North Darfur through Urgent Actions and appeal cases, including after 70 men, women and children were killed in attacks in July in Korma, and 67 people died in the Jebel Moon area in October. From September, hundreds more civilians were killed, tortured and raped, and thousands forcibly displaced in a renewed counter-insurgency offensive in northern and west Darfur.

■ On a Day for Darfur in September, AI campaigned in coalition with other human rights organizations for UN peacekeepers to be allowed to protect civilians in Darfur. In three weeks, 23,000 people had signed AI's online petition to the UN Security Council and the number continued to rise. Another day dedicated to campaigning on Darfur in

MURAT KURNAZ WAS RELEASED IN AUGUST 2006 FROM NEARLY FIVE YEARS' DETENTION AT GUANTÁNAMO AFTER PRESSURE FROM HIS FAMILY, LAWYERS AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

December focused the campaigning of AI and other groups on the plight of women (*Sudan/Chad: 'No one to help them' – Rape extends from Darfur into eastern Chad*, AI Index: AFR 54/087/2006).

■ The effective imprisonment by Janjawid of hundreds of thousands of displaced people in the camps was reported in October in *Sudan: Crying out for safety* (AI Index: AFR 54/055/2006). In November, as Sudanese forces carried out indiscriminate aerial bombardment using Russian- and Chinese-supplied planes and helicopters, AI called for the 2005 UN Security Council arms ban on all parties to the Darfur conflict to be implemented and fully enforced (*Sudan/China: Appeal by Amnesty International to the Chinese government on the occasion of the China-Africa Summit for Development and Cooperation*, AI Index: AFR 54/072/2006).

■ In November, AI called on the African Union to press the government of Sudan to consent to the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission (*The African Commission: Amnesty International's oral statement on the human rights situation in Africa*, AI Index: AFR 01/012/2006). AI reported on the tens of thousands of people at risk as insecurity and restrictions imposed on humanitarian organizations by the Sudanese government

forced cutbacks in the aid operation in Darfur in *Sudan: Darfur – Threats to humanitarian aid* (AI Index: AFR 54/031/2006).

■ In December, AI protested at the timidity of the resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in a Special Session on Darfur. The Council agreed to send its own

assessment mission to Darfur, but failed to respond to the urgency and magnitude of the human rights crisis on the basis of the existing, compelling evidence of close government links to Janjawid abuses.

■ AI was given the names of people killed in a Janjawid attack from Sudan on the town of

Koloy in eastern Chad, November 2006. "In parting the Imam thanked me, thanked Amnesty International for coming," an AI delegate reported. "He stressed that he had gone to the capital two times to speak with authorities. He speaks frequently with local government and military officials, various international agencies have been by, but no one had ever asked for the names before. And he stressed: that matters so much."

ISRAEL AND LEBANON: CIVILIANS UNDER FIRE

In July a major military conflict erupted between Israeli forces and Hizbullah forces based in Lebanon after Hizbullah fighters crossed into Israel and attacked an army patrol. By the time a ceasefire was agreed 34 days later, Israeli attacks had killed more than 1,000 civilians in Lebanon, displaced around a million people, and destroyed thousands of homes and much of Lebanon's civilian infrastructure. Hizbullah launched missiles into civilian areas of Israel, causing the deaths of 43 civilians, displacing many thousands of people from their homes in northern Israel and damaging hundreds of buildings.

■ AI delegates visited both Israel and Lebanon during the fighting and in the immediate aftermath to research violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, by both sides. AI delegates interviewed hundreds of people whose lives had been devastated by unlawful attacks, visited numerous sites where rockets, artillery shells and bombs, including cluster munitions, had struck, and spoke to non-governmental organizations. AI met and obtained information from senior Israeli military and government officials, the Lebanese authorities and Hizbullah. It also repeatedly requested information about specific military operations from Israel and Hizbullah.

■ From the outset of the conflict AI called on both sides to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law (the laws of war), particularly those relating to the protection of civilians. However, civilians were bearing the brunt of the conflict and AI

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joined the call for a ceasefire made by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and other world leaders. In July, AI published *Israel/Lebanon: Israel and Hizbullah must spare civilians – Obligations under international humanitarian law of the parties to the conflict in Israel and Lebanon*, a reminder to the parties of their legal obligations (AI Index: MDE 15/070/2006).

■ Following the end of the hostilities, and after conducting further research and discussions with officials, AI issued two briefings covering aspects of the conflict. In August it published *Israel/Lebanon: Deliberate destruction or "collateral damage"? Israeli attacks against civilian infrastructure* (AI Index: MDE 18/007/2006). AI found that Israeli forces had committed indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, pursuing a strategy that appeared intended to punish the people of Lebanon and their government for not turning against Hizbullah, as well as harming Hizbullah's military capability.

■ In September, AI published *Israel/Lebanon: Under fire – Hizbullah's attacks on northern Israel* (AI Index: MDE 02/025/2006). This concluded that Hizbullah had committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes. Its rocket attacks amounted to deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian objects, and indiscriminate attacks. The attacks also violated other rules of international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of reprisal attacks on the civilian population.

■ In November, AI published *Israel/Lebanon: Out of all proportion – civilians bear the brunt of the war* (AI Index: MDE 02/033/2006). This covered further aspects of the conduct and consequences of Israeli military actions in Lebanon. It analysed patterns of Israeli attacks and a number of specific incidents in which civilians were killed in Lebanon. It highlighted the impact on civilian life of other Israeli attacks, including the legacy of the widespread cluster bomb bombardment of south Lebanon by Israeli forces in the last days of the war. It also summarized AI's conclusions with regard to the overall conduct of both Israeli forces and Hizbullah fighters.

■ "I have lost all my children, my mother, my sisters. My wife is in a very serious condition... How do you tell a mother that she has lost all her children?" Ahmad Badran spoke to AI delegates in al-Ghazieh village in south Lebanon after watching the bodies of eight members of his family being dug from under a pile of rubble. On 7 August an Israeli missile hit his home, killing his four children, his mother, his two sisters and his niece, and critically injuring his wife.

■ AI called for the UN to set up an international commission empowered to investigate the evidence of violations of international law by both Hizbullah and Israel, and to make provision for reparations for the victims. AI also called for an arms embargo on both sides, and an immediate moratorium on the use of cluster weapons. It urged all parties involved in the conflict to investigate alleged violations of international human rights law and ensure reparation for the victims.

■ After the conflict, AI members around the world focused their energy on calling for Israel immediately to hand over to the UN maps showing the areas in which it had used cluster munitions, in order to assist the clearance of unexploded cluster bomblets which continue to kill and maim Lebanese civilians. Up to a million unexploded bomblets littered south Lebanon when the ceasefire came into effect, presenting a long-term threat to the civilian population.

■ In December an AI delegation, including Secretary General Irene Khan, visited Lebanon and Israel and the Occupied Territories for high-level talks with officials. To coincide with the visit, AI published a campaign briefing, *Israel and the Occupied Territories: Road to nowhere* (AI Index: MDE 15/093/2006) that focused on the spiralling human rights crisis in the Occupied Territories over the previous six years.

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INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

AI continued to take its work on behalf of individuals up to the international arena, campaigning for universal support for the International Criminal Court and for an end to impunity. It pushed hard for those responsible for the most serious crimes known to humanity to be brought to justice before international or national courts.

■ After years of campaigning by AI and others, Nigeria surrendered former Liberian President Charles Taylor in March to the Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, relating to his involvement in the country's civil war.

■ In March, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, charged with enlisting and recruiting child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, became the first person to be arrested and surrendered to the International Criminal Court.

■ Years of campaigning by AI and others saw progress in July when the Assembly of the African Union requested Senegal to promptly prosecute former Chadian President Hissène Habré, who is charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture. AI urged Senegal to enact the necessary legislation, and Senegal's Council of Ministers in November adopted a law to permit Hissène Habré to be tried.

Holding to account those responsible for human rights abuses in the past not only gives justice to the victims and survivors. It is an essential part of AI's struggle to protect against abuses of other individuals' rights in the present, and to prevent them in the future.