



AIZ WIRE

AI launches the DEMAND DIGNITY CAMPAIGN

"Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life."

Nelson Mandela

What is Demand Dignity?

On the 28th of May 2009 Amnesty International will launch the Demand Dignity Campaign. Poverty is caused by human beings – it results from decisions made by governments, companies, institutions and others who hold the power to change people's lives for the better. It is possible to break the vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion by combating the human rights violations that drive and perpetuate them. Yet, those in power do not take full responsibility for the impact of their actions on the human rights of people living in poverty. Not all human rights are legally enforceable, and this is particularly true of the violations at the heart of poverty. It is still difficult to hold to account those who undermine human rights and drive people into poverty.

Governments deny responsibility for the impact of their policies on human rights of people beyond their borders; companies often seek to avoid responsibility for the impact of their activities on human rights of people at home and abroad.

Behind the bald statistics of poverty are individual and usually untold stories of discrimination, neglect and abuse. Poverty results from negligence and discrimination by governments and others in power, and from an unwillingness to change the status quo. Yet those responsible for the violations that create poverty are not held accountable, and those affected are denied the knowledge and power to shape their future.

Millions of people worldwide live in intolerable slum conditions, without access to minimum essential levels of clean water, sanitation, health care, security or education. When people establish their own housing solutions they are often torn from their homes and left homeless. Since 2000, at least three million people have been forcibly evicted in Africa alone. In many places women are denied equal rights to their homes and land, and Indigenous peoples' land rights are ignored in favour of big business. This campaign will focus on forced evictions, the right to adequate housing for all, gender discrimination in rights to own housing and land, and Indigenous peoples' land rights.

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Our campaign will have three key demands:

i) Accountability

People living in poverty have a right to hold to account those responsible for the human rights violations that affect them. All human rights should be legally enforceable, including economic, social and cultural rights. All those responsible, including companies and governments at home and abroad, as well as the World Bank, should be legally accountable for the impact of their activities on human rights.

ii) Access to rights for all

Governments should promote equality and ensure nondiscrimination in their poverty eradication programmes at home and abroad. Global development projects should secure greater protection for the human rights of people living in poverty, which should include redressing patterns of exclusion and increasing access to key resources and services including land, housing and health care.

iii) Respect for people's agency – their right to control their lives

People living in poverty should be respected and empowered as the key agents of the fight for their right to live with dignity. Governments, companies and others in power should respect their

- Right to know – for example, how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS or the likely impact of resource extraction from their land
- Right to take part and protest- to genuine participation in deciding how they will be affected by development and investment, and to be able to speak out and defend their rights without fear or intimidation

Our campaign will call for changes to laws, policies and practices so that people living in poverty, and those who work for and with them, can hold those in power to account for violations of their human rights. AI will focus on a limited number of strong research and campaigning projects in key countries, which illustrate how people are forced into economic, physical and social insecurity by human rights violations. This will enable us to campaign for individual remedies for those abuses while building momentum for broader policy and legal changes at the national and international level, which would close the space for those abuses to recur. In this way, we believe, the human rights and human dignity of everyone will be upheld.

Demand Dignity and AlZim

For AIZ, the demand dignity campaign means human rights for human dignity. The organization will demand dignity for such issues such as

i) The right to adequate housing

Without adequate housing, employment is difficult to secure and maintain, physical and mental health is threatened, education is impeded, violence is more easily perpetrated, privacy is impaired and relations are strained. Housing should be accessible to all, including the poor. Everyone should have a degree of security of tenure, protecting them from forced evictions, harassment and other threats.

Services available should include safe drinking water, sanitation and energy. Forced evictions where people are removed involuntarily from their homes without legal protection or the

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assurance of alternative accommodation are a gross violation of a range of human rights. They often leave people at risk of damage to health, unemployment, sexual abuse and children unable to continue with their education.

ii)The right to water

Lack of safe water is a cause of serious illness such as the diarrheal diseases. The right to water is recognized in international and regional instruments as well as national constitutions. Access to sufficient clean water and sanitation is essential to realize the right to health, to food and to secure livelihood.

Demand is on

- Sufficiently available water
- Access to clean, clear and pure water
- Quality of water- free from harmful organisms or pollution

iii)The right to health

The right to health is the right to the 'highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.'

It encompasses the right to control one's health and body (healthy living) and equality to access health care(health care)

The campaign demands

- Availability of adequate health care facilities, trained professionals and essential medicines

- Accessibility of health facilities, goods, services and information to everyone without discrimination.
- Acceptable health facilities, goods and services in adherence to medical ethics
- Quality- this requires skilled medical personnel, scientifically approved and unexpired drugs and hospital equipment, adequate sanitation among other things.

iv)The right to adequate food.

Zimbabwe needs to immediately tackle hunger and ensure that "every man, woman and child alone or in the community with others has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.

Human Dignity demands food needs to be

- Availability
- Accessible
- Acceptable

One of the basic obligations of the state under the right to food is the duty on states not to starve those within their control such as prisoners. The UN Human Rights Committee has established, when states arrest and detain individuals, it takes the responsibility to care for their lives for e.g provide adequate medical treatment, living conditions and food.

Tell us what you think, take part, promote human dignity!

Feel free to take part in Amnesty Activities or voice your concerns on the following contact details.

The Director

Amnesty International Zimbabwe

56 Midlothian Avenue

Eastlea, Harare

Email: czilala@amnesty.co.zw or ychikwanda@amnesty.co.zw

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ACT NOW: International Solidarity

Stop Violence Against Women

AIZ took action now by signing and sending postcards to Haitian Authorities calling them to implement the national Plan to Combat Violence Against Women. In particular the postcards called on Haitian Authorities to mobilize all necessary resources to protect girls and women from sexual violence during carnival. The true extent of sexual violence against girls is not known as dozens of girls report being raped at gun point by groups of young men during carnival. The postcard message read: *Stop Sexual Violence Against Haitian Girls*

Release Patrick Okoroafor in Nigeria

Patrick Okoroafor was 14 years old when he was falsely accused and arrested for armed robbery and kidnapping. He was sentenced to death when he was 16 but in 2001 the High Court ruled it was 'illegal, null and void.' Patrick is now 28. AIZ also called for the release of Patrick Okoroafor.

Stop Executions in Saudi Arabia

AIZ also campaigned against executions in Saudi Arabia. At least 102 people were executed in 2008. Amnesty International is campaigning for these and other death sentences to be commuted.

Amnesty International is a global movement of 2.2million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign on human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other International Human rights standards.

Become a Member today!

Join Amnesty International today. Become part of a movement of activists who campaign for human rights around the world. Fill in a Membership form. Membership Fee is only US\$1. Contact AIZ or Human Rights Education Groups near you for membership forms and to take part in Amnesty Activities. **Remember, there is strength in numbers, and power in movements, together we can make our voices heard.**

Human Rights Education Groups Manicaland -Mutare

Itai Karipaire-Eastern Arts Ensembles
0913 018 314

Mat. North-Hwange

Petros Ndlovu –Dragline Coalition
0912 813 865

Bulawayo

Witness Tavarwisa- Bambiela Art Ensembles
011 713 520

Masvingo

Lafious Huruva-Pisa Pisa
0912 317 828

Mashonaland West- Karoi

Takesure Musiwa- Baptism of Fire
0912 904 450

Or Contact the following Board Members

Mr J. Dzvinamurungu - 0912600656 (Harare)
Mr F Mwene- 0912 331409/023514322(Bulawayo)
Mrs S Zvarebwanashe- 023 893952 (Masvingo)
Mr M Mabuto – 0912285385 (Harare)
Mr V Nhliziyo -09 480221 (Bulawayo)