



**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FIRSTS

### **1<sup>st</sup> Appeal**

Amnesty International's first appeal was launched by Peter Benenson in The Observer newspaper in the UK with the publication of an article, 'The Forgotten Prisoners', which called for the release of two Portuguese students imprisoned for raising a toast to freedom. The appeal was reprinted in other papers across the world and proved to be the genesis of Amnesty International.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Mission**

Amnesty International's first research mission was to Ghana in January 1962. Mr. Louis Blom-Cooper, a London lawyer, went to interview the Minister of Interior and to obtain information on members of opposition that were held under the Preventive Detention Act.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report**

Published in September 1962, Amnesty International's first annual report highlighted the cases of 210 prisoners adopted by 70 groups in 7 countries, and the 1,200 cases documented in the Prisoners of Conscience Library.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Report**

In September 1965 Amnesty International published simultaneous reports on prison conditions in Portugal, South Africa and Romania.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Urgent Action**

Amnesty International issued its first Urgent Action on 19 March 1973, on behalf of Professor Luiz Basilio Rossi, a Brazilian arrested for political reasons. Prof. Rossi believed that Amnesty International's appeals were crucial: "*I knew that my case had become public, I knew they could no longer kill me. Then the pressure on me decreased and conditions improved.*" Released on bail in October 1973, he then travelled to Belgium. The trial took place in March 1975 and though not sentenced an order for his arrest was issued. His wife later became one of the founder members of Amnesty International Brazil's Health Professionals network.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Campaign**

Amnesty International launched its first worldwide campaign - for the abolition of torture - in 1972.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Digital campaign**

Amnesty International launched its first digital campaign [www.stoptorture.org](http://www.stoptorture.org) in 2000.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Prisoners of Conscience**

#### **Constantin Noica**

A philosopher from Romania who in 1958 was sentenced to 25 years' forced labour as he had failed to abide by the terms of isolation while "rusticated" (sent temporarily away from university as punishment).

***He was pardoned after 6 years as part of a general amnesty and released in August 1964.***

**Rev. Ashton Jones**

A 65 year old Minister and leading figure in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), organising Freedom Rides against racial segregation in the US. He was repeatedly beaten up and three times imprisoned.

***Released.***

**Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary**

An opposition figure of the Communist government in Hungary. He was held under house arrest at the US Embassy in Budapest in the late 1960s.

***Released.***

**Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague**

A concentration camp survivor, in 1948 he was arrested and imprisoned for delivering a sermon protesting about the new Communist government that had seized power in a coup. In 1961, Beran had been imprisoned for 13 years.

***Released. In 1967 he celebrated his freedom by lighting an Amnesty International candle in Rome.***

**Toni Ambatielos**

A Greek communist imprisoned for his trade union activities with a Maritime union.

***Released in 1963.***

**Dr. Agostino Neto**

An Angolan poet and doctor who suffered terrible brutality at the hands of the ruling Portuguese authorities. In June 1960 he was flogged in view of his family, and imprisoned without trial for the "crime" of trying to improve health care in his country.

***Placed under house arrest from which he escaped. He went on to become the first President of Angola.***