

Amnesty International

Miami Chapter

Local Group 248

Newsletter - November 2005

Meetings are at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month:
November 9, December 14, January 11, ...

Join us at **Books and Books**, 265 Aragon Avenue, Coral Gables, 305-442-4408

Visit our website at: <http://www.aimiami.org/>

For newsletter submissions: ai248ai@netscape.net (by the first week of each month.)

Oct 28, 2005

[Go to original](#)

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/mexico/document.do?id=ENGAMR410802005>

100th Ratification of International Criminal Court Marks an Historic Development in International Justice



Iraqi prisoner, Abu Ghraib, Iraq. © AP.

Amnesty International today welcomed Mexico's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a landmark in the fight to end impunity for the gravest possible crimes under international law.

On 28 October 2005, Mexico became the 100th state party to the Rome Statute marking an important milestone towards universal support of the International Criminal Court. Over half of the international community have now ratified.

Mexico's ratification affirms the overwhelming support for the International Criminal Court. Amnesty International calls on all other states that have not yet ratified the Rome Statute to do so as soon as possible.

Every ratification discredits the groundless accusations by opponents of the Court, in particular the United States, that the Court has inadequate safeguards against politically motivated prosecutions. 100 states are satisfied that this is not the case.

Amnesty International also welcomed recent reports that Mexico has refused to sign an unlawful impunity agreement with the USA. By doing so, it joins more than 50 other states that have also refused, committing instead to upholding the fundamental principle that no one should have impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity.

It is now essential that Mexico amend its national laws to ensure that crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes can be investigated and prosecuted by its national courts and to enable it to cooperate fully with the Court. This process of implementation of the Rome Statute should be transparent and be open to full consultation with civil society.

To ensure there are no obstacles to cooperation, Mexico must also ratify and implement the Court's Agreement on Privileges and Immunities.

Background

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted on 17 July 1998, provides that the Court will have initial jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Statute entered into force on 1 July 2002.

States that have ratified the Rome Statute accept the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in their national courts. The Court will only step in when national courts are unable or unwilling to do so.

The Court is currently conducting three full investigations into crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Uganda. On 13 October 2005, the Court unsealed its first arrest warrants for five members of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, who are charged with committing crimes against humanity and war crimes. See: Amnesty International's Press Release, *Uganda: First ever arrest warrants – a first step towards addressing impunity* (AI Index: AFR 59/008/2005). [Go to Press Release](#)

For more than two years, the USA has been conducting a campaign to undermine the International Criminal Court by asking states to sign illegal bilateral impunity agreements which commit them not to surrender US personnel accused of genocide crimes against humanity and war crimes to the Court.

Why We Do Human Rights Work

Xiaodong Li, who was jailed and beaten in China for breaking a law against private worship, fled to the United States. He was nearly sent back to China after a U.S. court ruled, mistakenly, that he had been punished not for his religion but merely for his “religious activities.” Amnesty and other organizations wrote briefs to persuade the court it had erred – and succeeded. Mr. Li is now safe. [Read more](#) 2005-10-03

Human Rights After 9/11

(More information on AI’s concerns can be found at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/index.do>.

Actions can be seen at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/actions.do>)

The Senate recently passed the anti-torture (McCain) amendment by an overwhelming vote of 90-9.

Earlier this month, the Senate amended pending legislation to clarify how U.S. troops treat individuals held in U.S. custody and to affirm the country’s ban on the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. While this is an important victory, there is now a danger that this legislation could be revised again. We need your help to ensure that the amendment is retained and that the President signs this legislation into law. [Take action](#).

Full coverage: [Denounce Torture initiative](#).

Death Penalty News (Can You Make One Appeal?)

(Further material on capital punishment is available on the websites of Amnesty International’s Program to Abolish the Death penalty, at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/>, and the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP), at <http://www.ncadp.org/>.)

Can you find time to make **even one appeal** against capital punishment? We ask that, in each case, you seek a commutation of sentence to life in prison. Where you see a web link after the name of someone now facing execution, you can, if you are connected to the Internet, activate a link to an NCADP web page, from which you can send an appeal. Of course, you can use the contact information below to send a letter or fax, or make a phone call. It’s helpful to make different types of appeals.

North Carolina: Currently facing death are: **Steven Van McHone**, 11/11; **Elias Syriani**, 11/18; and **Kenneth Boyd**, 12/2. Please contact **Governor Mike Easley** at: Office of the Governor, 20301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-0301 / Phone: 919-733-5811 / Fax: 919-715-3175, 919-733-2120 / Email: clemency@ncmail.net or <http://www.governor.state.nc.us/email.asp?to=1>.

Texas: Now scheduled for execution are: **Charles Thacker**, 11/9; **Robert Rowell**, 11/15; **Shannon Thomas**, 11/16; and **Tony Ford**, 12/7. Please request of **Governor Rick Perry** that he grant a 30-day stay of execution (the most he is allowed to do on his own under Texas law), as well as clemency, if it is recommended by the **Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles**. Please request of the Board that it make a recommendation to the Governor in favor of a commutation of sentence to life in prison, which is required before the Governor may grant one. Appeals may be made to: Governor Rick Perry, Office of the Governor / P.O. Box 12428, Austin, TX 78711-2418, phone: 512-463-1782 / fax: 512-463-1849, e-mail: Fill out the form at the bottom of the page at: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/contact>. You may reach the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles at: Attn: **Ms. Rissie L. Owens**, Presiding Officer, Executive Clemency Section: P.O. Box 132401, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711-3401, phone: 512-406-5852, fax: 512-467-0945, 512-406-5482, email: bpp-pio@tdcj.state.tx.us.

Ohio: **John Spirko** is scheduled to be put to death on 11/15 http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1133, and **John R. Hicks** on 11/29. There is some question regarding Mr. Spirko’s guilt, as no physical evidence ties him to the crime in question. Please make appeals to **Governor Bob Taft** at: Vern Riffe Center / 77 S. High Street, 30 Floor / Columbus, OH 43215 / phone: 614-644-0813 / fax: 614-466-9354 / e-mail: <http://governor.ohio.gov/contactinfopage.asp>.

Virginia: **Robin Lovitt** and **Daryl Atkins** are due to executed on, respectively, 11/30 and 12/2. Mr. Atkins was the subject of a U.S. Supreme Court decision banning the execution of the mentally retarded. Virginia has subsequently claimed that Mr. Atkins IQ scores have since improved, and that he may now rightly be put to death. Please contact **Governor Mark Warner**, who has full power to grant a commutation of sentence. He may be reached at: Virginia Governor Mark Warner / State Capitol / Richmond, VA 23219 / Fax: 804-371-6351 / Tel: 804-786-2211 / http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Contact/email_form.html.

Arkansas: Now facing execution on 11/28 is **Eric Nance**. Please make appeals to **Governor Mike Huckabee**. He may be reached at: 250 State Capitol Bldg. / Little Rock, AR 72201 / Fax: 501-682-1382 / Tel: 501-682-2345. email: mike.huckabee@state.ar.us, web: <http://www.accessarkansas.org/governor/gems/eletter/commentform.html>.

Stop Violence Against Women

[Help Release Three Women Held Incommunicado in Syria](#)

Three young Syrian women are being held hostage by the authorities in order to pressure their husbands to turn themselves in. They are held incommunicado and in solitary confinement at the Military Intelligence Palestine Branch in Damascus. Two of the women are pregnant, and the third has her baby with her. Amnesty International believes they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. [More Actions](#)

China / Tibet Human Rights News

The following was provided by TibetInfoNet:

Tibet News Digest 15 October 2005 - 28 October 2005
21 October 2005

Tel: +44 (0)20 7814 9011 – email: tin@tibetinfo.net
www.tibetinfo.net

Bush China visit may not bring prisoner release

(Leading The Charge) China commonly frees political prisoners before major state visits, but **John Kamm**, whose **Dui Hua Foundation** works to free Chinese political prisoners, said that changing attitudes meant there may be no releases ahead of **US President George W. Bush's** November trip. The releases are seen as giving Beijing bargaining power before visits as a gesture of goodwill. "There has been a change since the new leadership started," Mr Kamm said, referring to **Hu Jintao** becoming president in 2003. "There is a new thinking and I have heard that the new leadership is less inclined to do it," Kamm said. In a departure from the pattern set by former leader **Jiang Zemin**, there were no publicized releases before Hu visited the United States in September 2005. One major release in the past year, that of **Rebiya Kadeer**, an ethnic Uighur businesswoman from Xinjiang, did come days before **Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice** visited China in March 2005. But Kamm said Kadeer's role in exile might have made the Chinese leadership more wary of prison diplomacy. "The conventional wisdom is that when someone is released from prison (...) especially if they go overseas, they quickly become irrelevant," he said. "Rebiya Kadeer is not irrelevant. She has rapidly become the voice of a people that is voiceless, and I think that too has had a certain impact," he said.

Amnesty International Miami at the Iraq Teach-In University of Miami Students and Local Organizations Hold Teach-in on the War in Iraq

On Sunday, November 6th, University of Miami students and local organizations opposed to the war in Iraq held a teach-in on the University of Miami campus to educate local students, and our community as a whole, on this issue. Amnesty Miami did not sponsor the event but participated in presenting a workshop.

After the Opening Plenary and welcoming remarks, **Warren Hoskins** of Miami for Peace provided a brief presentation, "Iraq 101." "Human Rights in Iraq" was then presented by our own **Steven Wetstein** in a workshop that also included a discussion and presentation about "Torture in Iraq" by **Natasha Parekh** and **Mohamed Kaif** of the University of Miami chapter, and "Violence against Women" by **Adriana Zambrano** of FIU and Amnesty International Miami.

Other workshops at the event included: "The Costs of the War at Home," presented by **Alyce Gowdy Wright**, Campaign Director of South Florida Jobs with Justice and **Jeanette Smith**, Miami Director of the American Friends Service Committee; "The Perspective of Veterans," presented by **Patrick McCann**, President of the Miami chapter of Veterans for Peace; "The Effects of War on Women," presented by **Reverend Linnea Pearson** of Women in Black; and "The Culture of Violence," presented by **Diane Lansberg**, Director of the Nonviolence Project. The teach-in was also sponsored by University of Miami Students Toward a New Democracy (UMSTAND).

Secret Detention / Torture

At the launch of its 2005 Annual Report, Amnesty International called on foreign governments to uphold their obligations under international law by investigating U.S. officials implicated in the development or implementation of interrogation techniques that constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. While the U.S. government has failed to conduct a genuinely independent and comprehensive investigation, the officials implicated in these crimes are nonetheless subject to investigation and possible arrest by other nations while traveling abroad.

Below are some of the latest developments.

Secret Detention / Torture

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA PRESS STATEMENT

November 2, 2005

AIUSA: New Info About Secret Detentions Not Surprising *Organization Calls for Independent Investigation Into Secret Facilities*

(Washington, DC) — Today, in light of the information disclosed by Dana Priest in the *Washington Post*, Amnesty International USA Executive Director William Schulz released the following statement:

“The secret detention facilities run by the CIA are a natural extension of the Bush administration’s bankrupt policies perpetrated in the name of national security. These detention centers, coupled with torture, indefinite detention and the ‘disappearing’ of people in custody, all constitute additional reasons why Congress must create an independent commission to investigate all aspects of U.S. detention and interrogation policies.”

“Amnesty International, the Red Cross and the Department of Defense have documented torture and other human rights violations in U.S.-run facilities. We can only imagine the abuses committed at so-called ‘black sites’ where there is no independent oversight. Holding people in prolonged solitary detention in secret facilities, without charge, trial or access to the outside world is a blatant violation of U.S obligations under international law.”

Background

In August 2005, Amnesty International released a report documenting the cases of two Yemeni nationals who were held in secret U.S. run facilities before resurfacing in Yemeni custody. The fact that these men were returned to Yemen indicates they were not high value detainees, demonstrating that almost any suspect can be subject to this unlawful practice.

The United States is bound under international treaties to apply the same human rights standards to anyone in U.S. custody, regardless of where in the world it holds those detained. Secret detentions amount to "disappearances" and are a violation of international law.

Contact: Devon Haynie 202-544-0200 x 302, 202-725-7676 (cell)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Media Advisory

AI Index: AMR 51/181/2005 (Public)
News Service No: 300
8 November 2005

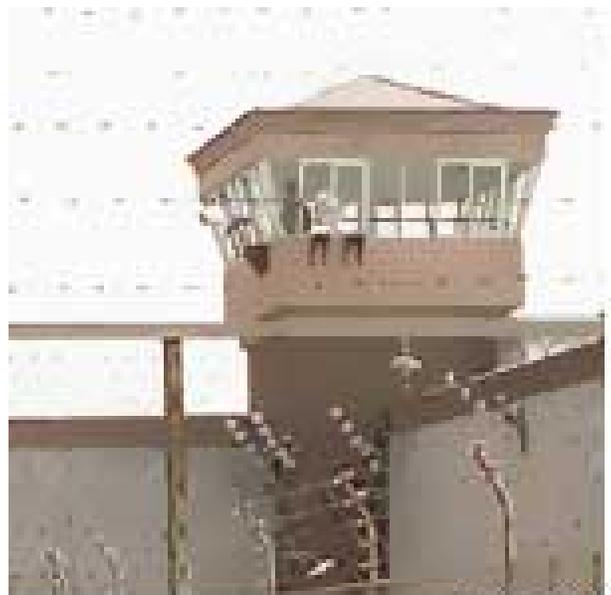
USA: New report corroborates existence of "black sites"

Amnesty International has released a new report detailing the detention of three Yemeni nationals who "disappeared" into the labyrinth of US-run secret detention facilities in 2003. The men, **Muhammad al-Assad, Salah Ali and Muhammad Bashmilah**, were kept in complete isolation in a series of secret detention centres operated by the United States, with no judicial review, notice to their family or contact with the outside world.

The report, "Secret Detention in CIA 'Black Sites'" provides detailed information about the three Yemeni nationals who only recently resurfaced in Yemeni custody, including allegations that they were tortured. The cases in the report suggest that the network of clandestine interrogation centres may be larger, more comprehensive and better organized than previously suspected.

Read the report here:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR511772005>



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Secret Detention / Torture

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE

[TORTURE Home](#)

November 7, 2005

New Amnesty International Report Corroborates 'Black Sites'

Provides Details on Torture and Secret Facility Conditions from Three "Disappeared" Yemeni Nationals
(Washington, DC) – Amnesty International today released [Secret Detention in CIA "Black Sites,"](#) a new report detailing the detention of three Yemeni nationals who had "disappeared" into the labyrinth of U.S.-run secret detention facilities in 2003. The men, **Muhammad al-Assad, Salah Ali and Muhammad Bashmilah**, were kept in complete isolation in a series of secret detention centers operated by the United States, with no judicial review, notice to their family or contact with the outside world.

This document, released on the heels of media reports exposing the United States' secret detention facilities known as *black sites*, provides detailed information about the three Yemeni nationals who were held in secret U.S.-run facilities before resurfacing in Yemeni custody, including allegations that they were tortured. That these men were returned to Yemeni authorities indicates they were not high-value detainees, demonstrating that almost any suspect can be subject to this unlawful practice. The cases further suggest that the network of clandestine interrogation centers are not reserved solely for high-value detainees, but may be larger, more comprehensive and better organized than previously suspected.

"Each man described facilities and procedures that could not have been created and maintained solely for three low-level suspects," said **Amnesty International USA Executive Director Dr. William F. Schulz**. "We fear that what we have heard from these three men is just one small part of the much broader picture of U.S. secret detentions around the world.

"It is absolutely outrageous that the Bush Administration, the self-described defender of democratic values around the world, holds and tortures people in secret facilities or outsources torture, without charge, trial or access to the outside world. This is a blatant violation of U.S. obligations under international law. We cannot ignore the evidence. These detention centers, coupled with torture, indefinite detention and the 'disappearing' of people in custody -- provide additional impetus for Congress to create an independent commission to investigate all aspects of U.S. detention and interrogation policies," added Schulz.

In the report, Amnesty International calls on the U.S. government to clarify its position on the legal status of the three Yemeni nationals. If the United States does not maintain any control over them, it should state this clearly, emphasizing that there are no U.S. conditions attached to their transfer. The organization also urges the U.S. government to disclose the locations of the detention centers where the three men were held; disclose the identities of all others held at these places, and invite the ICRC and other independent human rights organizations like Amnesty International to have full and regular access to those detained. All incommunicado and secret detention should be stopped immediately.

Amnesty International is also calling on the Yemeni government to promptly charge the three men with a recognizable criminal offense and bring them to trial in full accordance with international standards, or release them without condition.

Contact: Sharon Singh 202-544-0200 x302

Join Amnesty International USA's campaign "Denounce Torture: Stop It Now!" and demonstrate your opposition to torture.

RESOURCES

- [The Denounce Torture Teach-in Guide](#)
- [The Denounce Torture Action Guide](#) includes actions to help stop torture and ill-treatment in the U.S. led "war on terror."
- [The Torture Test](#)
- [Amnesty's 12-point Program](#) for the prevention of torture by agents of the State
- [Talking Points:](#) How to respond to those advocating the use of torture
- [Torture Worldwide:](#) Report available in our online store

BACKGROUND

- [About Torture](#)
- [Torture & the Law](#)
- [US and International Standards against Torture](#)
- [Tortured Logic: Thumbscrewing International Law](#)

LATEST NEWS

- [USA:](#) New report corroborates existence of "black sites", Nov 8, 2005
- [USA:](#) New Amnesty International Report Corroborates "Black Sites", Nov 7, 2005
- [USA:](#) New Info About Secret Detentions Not Surprising, Nov 2, 2005

[More News »](#)

Religious Persecution of Ahmadis

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: ASA 33/028/2005 (Public)

News Service No: 271

11 October 2005

Pakistan: Killing of Ahmadis continues amid impunity

Amnesty International fears that the perpetrators of Friday's attack on an Ahmadi mosque may go unpunished and that such attacks will continue unless the Pakistan authorities respond quickly to bring the perpetrators to justice and take steps to protect Ahmadis against future attack.

The continued violence against the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan has again been illustrated in an attack on worshippers in a mosque in the village of Mong, near the town of Mandi Behaudin in Punjab Province, on 7 October 2005. Eight people were killed and at least 18 injured in the attack.

Police have reported that three masked men approached the mosque on a motorcycle before entering the mosque and firing on those gathered for Friday prayers. Witnesses report that the men then escaped on the motorcycle leaving eight dead and many people crying and covered in blood.

Police investigations of previous targeted killings of Ahmadis in Pakistan have been slow or have not taken place at all. In many cases the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. Amnesty International believes that the government's consistent failure to investigate attacks and killings of members of religious minorities fails to discourage further human rights abuses against such groups. The right to freedom of religion, as laid down in the Pakistani constitution and in international human rights law, must be made a reality for all religious minorities in Pakistan.

Over the years Amnesty International has been informed of numerous targeted killings of Ahmadis, usually carried out with impunity. In some cases, the targeted Ahmadis themselves were subjected to criminal charges. In one incident in October 2000, eight Ahmadis were murdered in the village of Ghatialian, Sialkot district, in an incident similar to that of 7 October 2005. In October 2000 gunmen opened fire on Ahmadis while they were gathered at a mosque for worship. Five Ahmadis who witnessed the attack and reported the incident to the police, along with 21 other Ahmadis, were arrested and many of them are still serving life sentences for what Amnesty International believes to be false charges. None of the gunmen were ever arrested or brought to justice.

Background

Ahmadis are considered heretical by orthodox Muslims in Pakistan but see themselves as Muslim. The Ahmadiyya community was declared non-Muslim in Pakistan in 1974 and a number of laws were subsequently passed which make it a criminal offence for Ahmadis to profess, practice and preach their faith. Dozens of Ahmadis have been charged with religious offences, including calling for prayers, preaching their faith or calling their place of worship a 'mosque.' Several have been charged with blasphemy under section 295C of the Pakistani Penal Code (PPC), which carries the mandatory death penalty. So far all death sentences for blasphemy have been overturned by the higher judiciary.

Amnesty International has appealed to successive governments of Pakistan to abolish the laws relating to religious offences, which effectively criminalize any exercise of the right to freedom of religion by Ahmadis and the blasphemy law under section 295C PPC.

[PAKISTAN Home](#)

- [Protect the Rights of the Women of Pakistan](#)

[More Actions »](#)

LATEST NEWS

- [Pakistan](#): Killing of Ahmadis continues amid impunity, Oct 11, 2005
- [Pakistan/India](#): Human rights must be central to response to massive earthquake, Oct 10, 2005
- [Pakistan](#): Pres. Musharraf should apologize, Sep 15, 2005
- [Pakistan](#): Statement of Dr. William F. Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, On the Treatment of Rape Survivor Mukhtaran Bibi by the Pakistani Government, Jun 16, 2005

[More News »](#)

LATEST REPORTS

- [Pakistan](#): Recommendations for an effective National Human Rights Commission, Jul 20, 2005
- [Pakistan](#): Human rights abuses in the search for al-Qa'ida and the Taleban in the tribal areas, Mar 31, 2004
- [Pakistan](#): Open Letter to President Pervez Musharraf, Feb 2, 2004
- [Pakistan](#): Denial of basic rights for child prisoners, Oct 22, 2003

[More Reports »](#)

Announcement

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH MOST GRACIOUS MOST MERCIFUL

Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

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10 am – 6 pm

Miami Dade Community College
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*Holy Quran and Islamic Books
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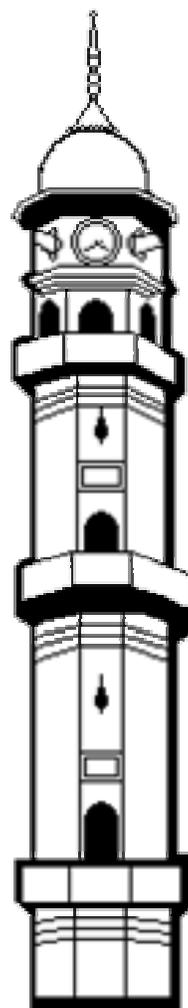
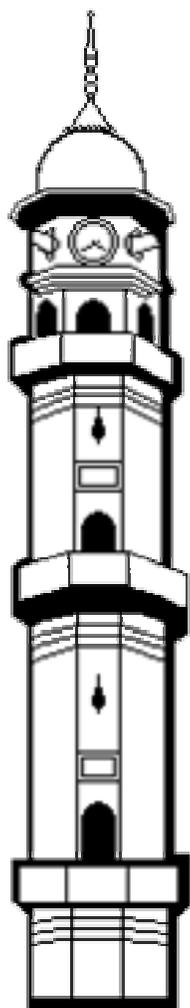
For more information Contact:

**Baitul Naseer Mosque
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
208 NW 7th CT, Hallandale Beach, FL 33009**

Phone: (954) 241 7373 & 1800-WHY ISLAM

E-mail: ahmadiyya@comcast.net

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"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights