

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



**amnesty
international
lethbridge action
circle A97**



2009 annual report

**Dedicated to the memory of
Blaz Robert Kosta
Human Rights Campaigner**





1. Who we are

Amnesty International Lethbridge began in March 2007. We have grown to over 500 members in the past three years, and are the only human rights organization in southern Alberta.

Throughout the year, we keep our members updated through an e-bulletin *The Barbed Wire* and through our website and social networking sites.

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights. Amnesty International is governed by its members; we are independent of all governments, political persuasions, and religious creeds.

We are building a world in which every person enjoys the rights included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. Towards this end:

- Amnesty International takes action to stop grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination. We campaign, for example, to free prisoners of conscience, protect refugees, abolish the death penalty, and end political killings, “disappearances” and torture.
- Amnesty International seeks to expose human rights abuses accurately and quickly. We systematically and independently research the facts of individual cases and patterns of human rights abuses. These findings are publicized, and members, supporters, and staff then mobilize persistent public pressure on governments, armed political groups, companies and others to prevent and stop these violations.

2. What we did this year

January

- Published *2008 Annual Report*.
- Supervised two Social Marketing practicum students from the University of Lethbridge: Caleb Pierce and Conrad Chan.
- Supervised an Applied Studies student from the University of Lethbridge: Andrew Burrows Johnson.
- Met with the *City of Lethbridge Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination* committee, and discussed human rights initiatives being undertaken by our respective organizations.
- Began our monthly letter writing circles at The Penny Coffee House, with an appeal for our adopted prisoner of conscience, Burmese monk U Gambira. ATTENDANCE: Average of 15 people per month throughout the year.

February

- Revised our website, incorporating recommendations from our social marketing practicum students.



March

- Participated in *International's Women's Day*, hosted by the YWCA, by having a display table with three letter-writing appeals and a petition.
- Co-hosted the first *Dialogue on Racism* potluck with the Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge and Lethbridge Mennonite Church, March 5. ATTENDANCE: 60 people.
- Held our Annual General Meeting, March 10. We showed the film *Leaving Fear Behind* and served Tibetan food. This was followed by a candlelight march for Tibet. ATTENDANCE: 70 people.
- Set up display tables at the *International Film Festival* on March 24 and 26, and got signatures on postcards.
- Published *Dialogue on Racism: Sharing Salt* report.

April

- Had a *Close Guantanamo* table at the University of Lethbridge, and got postcards and petitions signed.
- Gave a presentation to the grade 3 class in Coaldale, who wrote postcards for the indigenous people of Paraguay, April 20.

May

- Sponsored two Amnesty International Lethbridge members to attend the Human Rights College in Halifax, Nova Scotia: Alicia Visser and Katelynn Goodwin.
- Sponsored two Amnesty International Lethbridge members to attend the Amnesty International Canada Annual General Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia: Sarah Sweet Grass and Cathleen McFarland.

June

- Joined the *Southern Alberta Ethnic Association*.
- Held a rally for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, June 2. ATTENDANCE: 32 people.
- Organized our first annual *Taste for Justice*. Seven restaurants participated.
- Had a facepainting booth and signed petitions at *National Aboriginal Day*, June 21.
- Provided two workshops on safety training for parades and demonstrations in conjunction with the City of Lethbridge. We invited local nonprofit organizations to attend. ATTENDANCE: 30 people.
- Held a rally for Iran, June 25. ATTENDANCE: 15 people.
- Contributed to the *GLBTTQ Pride* weekend, by making a speech at the rainbow flag raising, helping at the barbecue, and having a display table at the music festival, June 12-14.
- Had a facepainting booth at the *Southern Alberta Ethnic Association Multicultural Day*, June 26. We handed out pamphlets about Amnesty International.
- Developed a volunteer policy.

July

- Held a public education event: *Investing in Conflict: Uganda and Sudan*, July 26. This event received support from the *Save Darfur Coalition*, and the *Mennonite Central Committee*. ATTENDANCE: 50 people.

August

- Co-hosted the *Friendship Festival* with Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge, August 14. This was attended by 100 people.
- Eighteen Amnesty International Lethbridge volunteers did skits about human rights, and pulled a mobile prison in the *Whoop Up Days Parade*, August 18.
- Helped with sponsorship of the *Rhino in the Room Film Festival*.
- Supervised an Applied Studies practicum student from the University of Lethbridge: Nuzreth Vanrobaeys.

September

- Began holding our monthly letter writing circles at our new location: The Round Street Cafe!
- Had a display table at the *Take Back the Night* march, September 11, and got signatures on petitions.
- Had display tables at the University of Lethbridge during rush week, and on September 17. We got signatures on petitions.
- Participated in Amnesty International Canada diversity review.





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October

- Screened the film *Burma's Secret War*, October 6. ATTENDANCE: 50 people.
- Held a board of directors training workshop with Don Wright, Regional Coordinator, Amnesty International Canada, October 1.
- Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada, gave a free public lecture at the University of Lethbridge on October 2. Donors and board members attended a dinner with Mr. Neve prior to the lecture. A free public reception followed. This event was co-hosted by the *University of Lethbridge Students' Union*, the *Graduate Students' Association*, and the *Lethbridge Public Interest Research Group*. ATTENDANCE: 175 people.
- The board of directors attended the Amnesty International regional meeting in Calgary, October 3.
- Held our third annual *Sisters in Spirit Vigil*, October 5. ATTENDANCE: 350 people.
- Had a display table at the University of Lethbridge, October 28, and got signatures on petitions.
- Delivered a presentation on Stolen Sisters to a social work class at the University of Lethbridge.

November

- Showed the film *Inside Burma's Uprising*, November 3. ATTENDANCE: 50 people.
- Provided volunteer support to the second *Dialogue on Racism* potluck, November 23, which was organized by the *Lethbridge Action on Racism Circle*. ATTENDANCE: 45 people.
- Ten Amnesty International Lethbridge volunteers made a short film about Shell's corporate actions in the Niger Delta, November 7. This film was uploaded to many different websites, including *YouTube*.
- Had a display table at the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Week at Lethbridge College.
- Gave a presentation on Amnesty International to a social marketing class at the University of Lethbridge.
- Participated in Amnesty International Canada strategic review.

December

- Gave out volunteer awards and wrote greeting cards to prisoners of conscience, December 1. ATTENDANCE: 40 people.
- Gave a presentation about Amnesty International to the *Public Service Alliance of Canada*.
- Held our third annual *Write for Rights*, December 10. ATTENDANCE: 85 people.



3. Our community roots

This year we had support from several local and national organizations:

- The Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge
- Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society
- City Manager Garth Sherwin, The City of Lethbridge
- The Gay and Lesbian Alliance and GALIA
- KAIROS
- Lethbridge Action on Racism Circle
- Lethbridge Mennonite Church
- Lethbridge Public Interest Research Group
- Lethbridge Public Library
- Mennonite Central Committee
- The Native Women's Association of Canada
- Rhino in the Room Film Festival
- Save Darfur Coalition of Canada
- Southern Alberta Ethnic Association
- The University of Lethbridge Students' Union
- The University of Lethbridge Graduate Students' Association
- The YWCA, Harbour House



4. Human rights appeals

During the past year, we have written thousands of letters and postcards for many prisoners of conscience and victims of human rights abuses, and obtained hundreds of signatures on many different petitions.

At our annual Write for Rights, we wrote 480 letters. Our total was the second highest in Canada, only surpassed by Amnesty International members in Toronto who wrote 625 letters!

Our primary focus has been on human rights violations taking place in:

- Myanmar (Burma)
- China (particularly Tibet)
- Colombia
- Paraguay
- Sudan (Darfur region)

Another area on which we have concentrated is the human rights of aboriginal peoples in Canada. We have worked on the issue of large numbers of murdered and missing aboriginal women across Canada, and the situation of the Lubicon Lake Cree in Alberta.

We have adopted a prisoner of conscience, U Gambira. We are responsible, along with several other Amnesty groups worldwide, for his case file. We work closely with the Myanmar coordinator of Amnesty International Canada and with the Chicago group in the USA.



5. Financial report – January 1 to December 31, 2009

We are completely volunteer-run, and rely on donations to support our work. We do not accept monies from federal, provincial, or municipal governments. Corporate donors must be socially and ethically responsible.

Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle A97 is a registered group of Amnesty International Canada. We submit an annual financial report to the national office in Ottawa, which is audited as part of the Amnesty International Canada yearly financial report.

If you would like more information, please contact us, and we would be happy to provide you with a copy of our yearly financial report to the national office.

Membership donations are for one year, and are \$15 for students/low income and \$35 for everyone else. Donations over \$10 are tax receiptable. To become a member, call 1-800-AMNESTY. Donations may be sent to our local group (address at the back of this report).





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6. Thank you to our volunteers

Current Board of Directors: Sonny Dhoot, Tseten Drawu, Katelynn Goodwin, Mary Kosta, Priti Maheshwari, Kamal Rizal, Sarah Sweet Grass, Alicia Visser, Joseph Quesnel

Former Board of Directors: Andre Duguay, Maureen Ebel, Gordon McFarlane, Cathleen McFarland, Katarzyna MacNaughton, Sophie Osaya

Volunteer/Donor Award Recipients for 2009 – Outstanding Contributions to Amnesty International: Maureen Ebel, Tseten Drawu, Sarah Sweet Grass, Katelynn Goodwin, Thomas Fox, Danis Clare, Arron Kardolus Wilson, Sherrill Smith, Alicia Visser, Jessie Parmar, Sophie Osaya, Lise Fox, Sonny Dhoot, Sherrie Kwan, Cherie Vandezande, Sheila Rogers, Ruth Preston Schilk, Floyd Sillito, Joseph Quesnel, Jacinda Weiss, Zaw Kyaw, Lynn Russell, Joanne Fiske, Nuzreth Vanrobaeys, Priti Maheshwari, Kesang Drawu, Troy Nickle, Jessica Goodrider, Mari MacDonald, Gord McFarlane, Rudy Sweet Grass, Kamal Rizal, Atnafu Fikre, Peter Lee, Andrew Burrows Johnston, Ira Provost, Stephen Penner, Jadeyn Cross, Joel Cross, Jarrith Vanrobaeys, Shelley Many Grey Horses, Trevor Hughes, Deb Lebeau, Farzanah Haftani, Jacqueline Preyde, Robert Campbell, Trudy Govier, Cathleen McFarland, Heather Rowland, Mary Kosta



Write for Rights: James Oldenburg, Salem Abraha, Floyd Sillito, Dale Ketcheson, Trish Hoskin, Danis Clare, Lauren Kosta, Mary Kosta, Tseten Drawu, Dee Dhaliwal, Priti Maheshwari, Katelynn Goodwin, Kamal Rizal, Sonny Dhoot, Alicia Visser, Joseph Quesnel, Jessie Parmar, Lethbridge Public Interest Research Group, Round Street Cafe

Sisters in Spirit Vigil: Cherie Vandezande, Jeremy Schultz, Sonny Dhoot, Troy Nickle, Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge, KAIROS, the YWCA, Chief Bob Byers, and the Blood Tribe Police. Special thanks to the SIS Vigil planning committee: Pam Blood, Charlene Bruised Head Mountain Horse, Tracy Beardy, Danis Clare, Treena Tallow, Jacinda Weiss, Joanne Fiske, Jacqueline Preyde, Coby Eagle Bear, Tseten Drawu, Nadine Eaglechild, Priti Maheshwari, Rachel Hoof, Cindy Ironshirt, Deb Lebeau, Tanya Pace Crosschild, Kerri Potvin, Kimberley Sweet Grass, Esther Tailfeathers, Sarah Sweet Grass

Visit of Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International: Mary Kosta, Katelynn Goodwin, Tseten Drawu, Danis Clare, Thu Aye, Arron Wilson, Thomas Fox, James Zanoni, Alex Masse, the University of Lethbridge Students' Union, Lethbridge Public Interest Research Group

"Inside Burma's Uprising" Film Screening: Sonny Dhoot, Judith Grossman, Mary Kosta, and Tseten Drawu



"Burma's Secret War" Film Screening: Sonny Dhoot, Judith Grossman, Jeremy Schultz, Maureen Ebel, and Mary Kosta

Whoop Up Days Parade: Joseph Quesnel, Thomas Fox, Ben Fox, Sonny Dhoot, Jessica Goodrider, Simon Bast, Jordan Lamay, Derek Spear Chief, Tseten Drawu, Mari MacDonald, Sarah Sweet Grass, Priti Maheshwari, Nuzreth Vanrobaeys Jadeyn Cross, Joel Cross, Jarrith Vanrobaeys, Jerri Drummond, Shelley Many Grey Horses, Troy Nickle, Gord McFarlane, Rayne Yellowhorn

Friendship Festival: Sylvia Yellow Old Woman, Mayor Bob Tarleck, Inspector Colin Catonio, Pastor Ruth Preston Schilk, Floyd Sillito with Westwind, Richard Doerksen, Ira Provost, Rudy Heavy Runner, Cam DeGroot, Brad Lang, Pow Navarro, Lance Tailfeathers, Olivia Tailfeathers, Donovan Tailfeathers, Tseten Drawu, Lewisa Chisholm, Sherrie Kwan, Joseph Quesnel, Jessie Parmar, Sarah Sweet Grass, Claire Benson, Corrine Scout, Jacinda Weiss, Jimmy Alpapara, Glenda Bonifacio, Lise Fox, Thomas Fox, Alicia Visser, Temi, Olusomi Idowu, Tricia Butt, Rene Plaizier, Sharmeen Zahir, Joan Wierzba, Mark Wierzba, Bev Litster, Zaw Kyaw, Lynn Russell, Arron Kardolus-Wilson, Knud Peterson, Heather Zarichney, Jo-Anne Fiske, Nuzreth Vanrobaeys, Priti Maheshwari, Kesang Drawu, Troy Nickle, Trudy Day Chief, Juliana Day Chief, Kesang Drawu

Investing in Conflict – Uganda and Sudan: Mary Kosta, Sherrill Smith, Alicia Visser, Jesse Parmar, Sophie Osaya, Lise Fox, Sonny Dhoot, Sherrie Kwan, Cherie Vandezande, Fehren Tuttle, Stephen Penner, Tseten Drawu, Constancia Waraga, Mennonite Central Committee, Mugassa Ateenyi, Save Darfur Coalition, Steve Baird, John Murray





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Taste for Justice: Tseten Drawu, Mary Kosta, Priti Maheshwari, Katelynn Goodwin, The Guesthouse Restaurant, Round Street Cafe, Abyssinian Restaurant, The All Canadian Chip Truck, Spring Rolls Restaurant, Esquires, Miro Bistro

National Aboriginal Day Facepainting Booth: Mary Kosta, Sarah Christensen, Tseten Drawu, Nuzreth Vanrobaeys

Multicultural Day Facepainting Booth: Tseten Drawu, Mary Kosta, Sarah Sweet Grass, Rudy Sweet Grass, Claudia Tyzo, Sarah Christensen

Dialogue on Racism Potlucks: Mayor Bob Tarleck, Chief Tom McKenzie, Constable Dan Walton, Lethbridge Mennonite Church, Pastor Ruth Preston Schilk, Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge, Jacinda Weiss, Lethbridge Action on Racism Circle, Mary Kosta, Sarah Sweet Grass, Pastor Jason Anderson, Dr. Trudy Govier, Dr. Jo-Anne Fiske, Mike Frank, Kayress dela Cruz, Mickey Kardolus-Wilson, Andrew Burrows Johnson, Sonny Dhoot, Katelynn Goodwin, Andre Duguay

Postering: Mary Kosta, Lauren Kosta, Dee Dhaliwal, Cherie Vandezande, Mari McDonald, Danis Clare, Sonny Dhoot, Jaime Alpapara, Priti Maheshwari, Sherrie Kwan

Monthly Letter Writing Circles: Maureen Ebel, Mary Kosta, Tseten Drawu, Sonny Dhoot, Dee Dhaliwal, The Penny Coffee House, The Round Street Cafe

Website: Andre Duguay, Luke Pickett





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7. Thank you to our donors

Abyssinian Restaurant
The All-Canadian Chip Truck
Jody Alslon
Gwen Ambrose
Angel's Touch Beauty Spa
Lynda Bartosek
Carol Beatty
The Body Shop
Barrie Broughton
Robert Campbell
Catwalk Salon
Cinnzeo
Trudy Day Chief
Amrita & Sameer Deshpande
Sonny Dhoot
Tasha Diamant
Kesang & Tseten Drawu
Maureen Ebel
The Engravers
Esquires
Salish Fenwick Wilson
Elizabeth Ferguson
Atnafu Fikre
First Choice Savings & Credit Union
Thomas Fox
Carol Getzlaf
Katelynn Goodwin
Trudy Govier
Judith Grossman
The Guesthouse Restaurant
Kyaw Moe Han
Katharina Herbst
Patsy Jeffrey
Josee's Imports
Juice Fare
Derrick Kanashiro
Arron Kardolus-Wilson
Bob Kosta
Sherrie Kwan
Peter Ksiazek
Brad Lang, LA Sound
Peter Lee
Lethbridge Public Interest Research Group
Priti Maheshwari
Cathleen McFarland
Gord McFarlane
Gwen McNabb



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Judy Millard
Miro Bistro
Mueller Photography Studio/Art Gallery
Brian Murray
Khin Than Myint
Naturistas
Troy Nickle
Nirvana Energy
Phil North
Sophie Osaya
Jessie Parmar
The Penny Coffee House
Sherry Presley
Jacqueline Preyde
Kamal Rizal
Round Street Cafe
Heather Rowland
Lynn Russell
Floyd Sillito
Sherrill Smith
Spring Rolls Restaurant
Elaine Stickel
Ten Thousand Villages
Amy Tiberghien
Nuzreth Vanrobaeys
Alicia Visser





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Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2385138358>

Report prepared by Mary Kosta.

Photos by Tseten Drawu, Troy Nickle, Lauren Kosta.