# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## A TRIBUTE TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, HELSINKI WATCH, AND AMERICAS WATCH

HON. MICHAEL D. BARNES
OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 25, 1985*

● Mr. BARNES. Mr. Speaker, an article in the May 12, 1985, Parade magazine described the important work of Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch, and Americas Watch on behalf of human rights around the world. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, I have had the opportunity to work closely with both Amnesty International and Americas Watch, and I can say that both the subcommittee and the victims of oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean have benefited greatly from their efforts. I am very pleased to include the article for the information of my colleagues.

[From the Parade Magazine, May 12, 1985]

THE GREATEST EVIL IS INDIFFERENCE

(By Michael Satchell)

In Diyarbakir Military prison in eastern Turkey, 32-year-old Pasa Uzun struggles to survive in a world of cruelty that is beyond the darkest imagination of most people. Five years of systematic torture, miserable food and brutal discipline have reduced him to something akin to a living corpse. He feet are blackened from *falaka*—the beating of the soles of the feet—and he walks with difficulty. His family and friends, permitted only rare visits, dare not complain of his condition, for they are not anxious to join him.

Pasa Uzun is guilty of nothing more than being born a Kurd, a despised and savagely persecuted ethnic minority in Turkey. He faces 16 more years in Diyarbakir. Without help or intervention, his chance of surviving is slim. He is as alone, and probably as afraid, as man can be.

Half a world away, in Cuba's Combinado del Este Prison, Ricardo Bofill, 41, once a professor of philosophy and the vice rector of the University of Havana, spends day after day alone in dark, windowless cell or lying on a cot in the prison infirmary. His health is precarious—he suffers from a serious heart ailment. He has served more than eight years in Cuban prisons for publicly complaining about the government's human rights violations. Fidel Castro, taking a cue from the Soviet Union, once had him locked up in a mental hospital.

Bofill is held incommunicado—he receives and sends no mail, is allowed no visitors. His wife, Maria Elena, and 18-year-old son, Alberto, live in Miami and depend upon released prisoners for scraps of news about his worsening condition. They worry about whether he can survive the 11 years his sentence still has to run.

Pasa Uzun and Ricardo Bofill are political prisoners, typical of uncounted tens of thousands of similar human rights victims who are rotting away, anonymous and largely forgotten, in the prisons of perhaps half the countries of the world. They are not terrorists who sought change by violence but activists whose only "crimes" were peaceful dissent, complaining of injustice, voicing opposition, demanding reform or seeking recognition for their cause—rights that are guaranteed and protected in the United States and other democratic nations.

Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonnèr, are the most widely known human rights victims: A critically acclaimed HBO television special last year starring Jason Robards and Glenda Jackson brought their poignant story into the homes of millions of Americans. Last January, during his tour of South Africa, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's visit with Winnie Mandela helped focus media attention on the 21-year imprisonment of her husband, Nelson Mandela, Africa's best-known political prisoner.

The vast majority of human rights victims, unfortunately, enjoy no such attention—or the protection that such publicity can bring. They are ordinary people like Pasa Uzun and Ricardo Bofill, far removed from America's consciousness and little known even in their own countries. Their greatest hope lies with human rights groups who work to expose abuses, end torture and executions, speed trials, improve conditions for prisoners and, hopefully, to engineer their freedom. It is a dauntingly difficult task. It is also one in which anyone can play a vital role.

There are three principal groups in the United States dedicated to ending human rights abuses: Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch and Americas Watch. Augmenting their efforts are professional groups—doctors, lawyers, educators—and émigré organizations that focus on abuses within a specific country or region.

"Every American should be concerned about human rights, because every American has a vested interest in the issue," says Robert L. Bernstein, president of Random House publishers. Long an activist for human rights, he is also the chairman of Helsinki Watch.

"It's a powerful tool to get people of other nations to believe in our way of life," adds Bernstein. "Violating basic human rights often promotes communism. It creates unrest and instability in a country, and this can lead to conflict. Conflict in turn may involve the United States. It may be your tax dollar that have to pay for American aid. It may be your son who is drafted to fight this war. Human rights is a far more important issue than many people realize."

The author, scholar and humanist Elie Wiesel says. "The greatest evil today is indifference: To know and not to act is a way of consenting to these injustices. The planet has become a very small place. what happens in other countries affects us."

Wiesel, who survived the Nazis' Buchenwald and Auschwitz concentration camps, shares a particular empathy with today's forgotten human rights victims.

"I felt during the war that what was being done was a secret." he says. "Later, I found out that it wasn't. Absolutely the greatest despair we Jews felt was when we realized that people knew what was being done but didn't care, didn't act to try to help. When we needed help, nobody came. This must not happen today."

Amnesty International, headquartered in London, is the largest, best known and most influential of the groups, with 150,000 members in the United States and 500,000 worldwide. Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977. Amnesty enjoys a reputation for scrupulous research and strict impartiality as it catalogs abuses and uses its membership to pressure offending governments.

The organization is structured to allow anyone to channel his or her energy and concerns directly toward helping victims. The membership is broken down into small "adoption" groups scattered throughout some 50 nations, with the groups formed around a church, a club, a neighborhood, a factory or an office.

Each group is assigned two so-called "prisoners of conscience"—victims from other countries who have been imprisoned for nonviolent activities. Group members send material aid to the victims and their families—money, food, clothing, medicine—and also launch a mail campaign. Letters of encouragement are sent to the victims; polite, carefully worded appeals for freedom are sent to anyone of influence—prison officials, a minister of security, an ambassador or the country's political leader.

Often there is no way of knowing if the prisoner receives the letters or if the appeals contribute to his welfare. Many times, though, this polite pressure through the simple tactic of writing letters can have a powerful effect.

A Dominican Republic trade union leader named Julio de Peña Valdez, for example, was seized in a police raid and held naked in an underground cell. Amnesty launched an extensive letter campaign that prodded Dominican President Joaquin Balaguer to release him.

"When the first 200 letters came, the guards gave me back my clothes," the grateful prisoner later wrote. "Then the next 200 came, and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming, 3,000 of them. The president was informed. The letters still kept arriving, and the president called the prison and told them to let me go.

"After I was released, the president called me to his office. He said: 'How is it that a trade union leader like you has so many friends from all over the world?' He showed me an enormous box full of letters he had received and, when we parted, he gave them to me."

Karel Kyncl, an imprisoned Czechoslovak journalist, said after his release: "A political prisoner comes to know about Amnesty's work on his behalf usually only indirectly, from the sarcastic remarks of his jailers or from pieces of information communicated to him by members of his family in their strictly censored letters. But it is enough to give him a wonderful feeling that he is not completely forgotten after all, that somebody cares."

Amnesty also has become synonymous with the effort to expose nations that practice torture—an issue steeped in both horror and hypocrisy. The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which all U.N. members subscribe, prohibits torture, and few nations are willing to admit that it happens within their borders. Yet a 1984 Amnesty report titled "Torture in the Eighties" carried meticulously detailed accounts of inhumane treatment of prisoners in 66 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by the Member on the floor.

By publicizing the abuses, Amnesty hopes that the leaders of repressive regimes will be shamed or pressured into curbing torture in the glare of world public opinion and, perhaps, the censure of other nations.

"Even the cruelest tyrants have an element of pride—they want to go down in history looking good," observes Richard Reoch, Amnesty's chief of press relations.

Amnesty's focus on torture victims includes a sort of emergency response team called the Urgent Action Network, which also relies on fast, direct input from members. It works like this: Word is received in London headquarters that a person has been arrested, taken to a detention center and is likely to be tortured. The information is quickly evaluated and flashed to Urgent Action Networks in various countries.

In the United States, Scott Harrison, a former Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, and his wife, Ellen, run the nationwide operation from their home near Nederland, Colo. By telephone, Telex and computer, they contact a network of volunteers. Within days, hundreds—perhaps thousands—of telegrams and letters are on their way to the country in question, appealing for the threatened prisoner.

Americas Watch and Helsinki Watch cooperate closely with Amnesty and share the same broad goals, but they operate differently. Instead of a mass-membership, grassroots organization, the Watch committees are made up of small groups of experts and professionals within various fields.

Helsinki Watch monitors human rights chiefly in the USSR, eastern Europe and Turkey, while Americas Watch concentrates on Central and South America and the Caribbean. The two committees, which can exert strong pressure, serve as watchdogs of official U.S. actions on human rights and are regularly called to testify before Congress.

Selective morality is one of their recurring complaints about U.S. foreign policy. Critics say that our government historically has denounced our Communist or leftist adversaries for human rights abuses while downplaying or ignoring the atrocities committed by our allies.

Aryeh Neier, vice chairman of both Watch committees, asserts: "One-third of the world's countries use torture on a regular basis. If the U.S. government genuinely put its muscle to work, it could influence many of these nations, and we would clearly be more effective. Most of the time, the State Department won't put its muscle behind human rights—it's just not willing to sacrifice its interests. It just looks the other way—and the awful suffering continues."

A perfect example of this dilemma is Turkey—and the case of Pasa Uzun, who is one of the thousands of political prisoners incarcerated and tortured under a martial-law crackdown that began in 1978 and was followed by a military coup in September 1980.

Turkey's importance to the United States is unquestioned. It anchors the southern flank of the NATO defensive line, provides an important intelligence listening post into the Soviet Union (with whom it shares a border) and operates bases for vast amounts of military equipment, including nuclear weapons.

After Israel and Egypt, Turkey is the third-largest recipient of American military and economic aid—$878 million approved by Congress in this fiscal year. The United States obviously can wield considerable influence over Turkey, yet this ally's human rights record is one of the worst.

Jeri Laber, executive director of Helsinki Watch, has traveled extensively throughout Turkey investigating abuses. She reports mass arrests, deplorable prison conditions and wiedespread torture of men, women—even children—that is, she says, "babaric, primitive and horrendous."

"Diyarbakir Military Prison is possibly the most horrifying hellhole in the world," Laber recently testified before a Congressional hearing. "It is a dungeon of horrors where prisoners are tortured bestially. Seven prisoners reportedly died in Diyarbakir in January 1984. A lawyer held in the prison, one of the few people who have emerged to report his experiences, personally witnessed the murders of 10 of his fellow prisoners, two of whom were burned alive."

Diyarbakir was built to hold 300 inmates. Pasa Uzun is one of 5,000 who are jammed into the nondescript, modern concrete structure lodged in the headquarters complex of Turkey's Seventh Army. Diyarbakir is the center of the Kurdistan region, where the Kurdish people have been under constant attack by the ruling Turks for decades.

A former student training to be a teacher, Pasa Uzun was a founding member of a Kurdish cultural and youth association. He was arrested in 1979 during a wave of violent oppression against Kurds, trade unionists, peace activists and others.

After a series of court hearings over a four-year period, he was found guilty by military judges of "separatist activities" and sentenced to 16 years. An Amnesty International investigation of his case states: "Pasa Uzun is reported to have been extensively tortured after he had delivered a 16-page defense statement during the opening hearing of his trial in November 1980. He is reported to have been unable to walk when brought to a trial hearing on March 19, 1981, and to have been barely audible when he tried to tell the court how he and other prisoners had been tortured."

And what of Pasa Uzun today?

"He's alive," reports an official at Amnesty's London headquarters. "We are uncertain as to his present state of health. Our last reports were that it was very poor. He needs help."

Information on Ricardo Bofill in Havana's Combinado del Este Prison is similarly sketchy. Like Pasa Uzun—and some 5000 other nonviolent political prisoners around the world—he has been adopted as an Amnesty "prisoner of conscience," but it's doubtful that he realizes that strangers overseas are aware of his plight and are writing appeals for his freedom.

Bofill first ran afoul of Cuban authorities in 1967, when he was imprisoned for five years for protesting human rights violations. After his release, he was prevented from returning to his academic career and was allowed to work only as a floor-sweeper in a can factory. His political activities continued, and he was locked up again in 1980 for sending human rights complaints and documents to the United Nations. (Castro has little patience with political dissent. A 45-year-old auto mechanic named Jesus Barrios is serving four years in Combinado del Este for publicly uttering, "Viva Reagan.")

After Bofill's release in 1982, he was subjected to constant official harassment. On April 29, 1983, fearful after telephone threats and other pressure, the small, slightly built Bofill sought refuge in the French Embassy. Cuban guards surrounded the compound, and high-level negotiations began. The French ambassador was given assurances by Cuba's vice president that Bofill would be allowed to leave the country, but the promise was broken. His attempts to emigrate and join his wife and son in Miami were rebuffed, and in September of that year—after he gave a brief interview to two French journalists—Bofill was arrested. After being locked up in a psychiatric hospital, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison for "deviationism."

"My mother and I are very worried about him," says Alberto Bofill, his son. "We have been told that he has received mental and physical torture. He has had a heart attack and gets no medicine. We were very disappointed when Castro did not release him last year with other political prisoners when Jesse Jackson went to Havana. We feel helpless because there's nothing we can do at this time."

Like Pasa Uzun, Ricardo Bofill is no longer an anonymous political prisoner. Whether he returns to the ranks of the forgotten and uncounted thousands of human rights victims remains to be seen.

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### In Soviet Asylum

For 11 years, Anna Chertkova, a former postal worker, has been imprisoned in the Ninth Section of the Special Psychiatric Hospital in Tashkent, USSR. She is neither ill nor crazy. The Soviet Union uses mental hospitals to punish dissidents and political prisoners. Anna Chertkova is a member of an officially unauthorized branch of the Baptist Church and a religious activist who refuses to renounce her belief.

Now in her late 50s, she has been the subject of official persecution for most of her life for her persistent religious proselytizing. For years, authorities denied her living accommodations in her hometown of Alma-Ata, and she was forced to survive for two winters in a lean-to hut she built from wooden scraps. In February 1974, she was tried on criminal charges of "spreading rumors and fabrications" and "disseminating anti-Soviet slander."

The Special Psychiatric Hospital in Tashkent was designed to hold dangerous mental patients and felons. It is surrounded by high walls and an electric fence and guarded by security men with automatic weapons. A source within the hospital got word to Amnesty International that Anna is subjected to repeated injections of powerful drugs because "she openly confesses her belief in God and refuses to accept communism."

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### Facing Death Sentence In Pakistan

Convincing evidence of a political frame-up is of little comfort to the Massachusetts relatives of Mohammed Ejaz Bhatti a 24-year-old Pakistani currently held in the Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore. After voluntarily appearing at a police station for questioning on Dec. 26, 1981, he was arrested, taken to the Moghalpura police station, hung upside down for several days and severely beaten.

An official report maintains that the police arrested Bhatti three days later (when he was in custody), after he fled from his parent's home with a grenade in his pocket. He was sentenced to 14 years of hard labor, later charged with terrorism and now faces a death sentence.

A student, Bhatti is a member of the Pakistan People's Party, which opposes the country's ruler, President Mohammed Zia. He appears to be the victim of a widespread police roundup of dissidents. His sister, Kausar, who works for Blue Cross in Boston, was allowed to visit her brother recently. Torture sessions involving beating and burning have left him in pitiful condition, she reports, and he is forced to wear leg irons continually.

"He survives on a punishment diet of moldy bread, boiled radishes and turnips, and tea," she reports. "He is allowed no protein. He is like a skeleton, and his teeth are dropping out. He has open wounds which will not heal. These people are so cruel."

DISAPPEARED AFTER ARREST IN HAITI

The case file on William Josma of Haiti is marked "Disappeared," for there has never been any official acknowledgement by the authorities of his arrest and detention. An engineer, owner of a construction business and a former math teacher, Josma, 36, was arrested in Port-au-Prince on April 4, 1981, by the infamous Tonton Macoutes, the security forces of Haitian President Jean Claude Duvalier. He was taken first to the Caserne Dessalines military barracks, where political prisoners are held incommunicado and in solitary confinement. Torture is often employed during interrogation.

The reason for his arrest isn't clear, but in 1979 Josma has stood as an opponent of Duvalier in the legislative elections. Government pressure forced him to withdraw as a candidate.

After three weeks of interrogation, he was transferred to the National Penitentiary. In January 1982—following an abortive invasion attempt by U.S.-based Haitian exiles—Josma was reported by fellow prisoners to have been taken away in handcuffs from his section of the jail. He has not been heard of since. The inmates report that Josma was accused of knowing about the invasion beforehand. An Amnesty International support group based in New York has written to about 40 Hatian officials, and Duvalier also has been petitioned, all without response. There is hope that Josma is still alive.●

## TELEVISION SUBTITLE EQUIPMENT FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

### HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 25, 1985*

● Mr. BONIOR of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing today legislation to provide a tax credit to ease the cost of purchasing television subtitle equipment for the use by the hearing impaired.

I am honored to be joined today in introducing this measure by a broadly based, bipartisan coalition including Mr. MRAZEK, Mr. RUSSO, Mr. BARNES, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. BATES, Mr. FORD of Michigan, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. EVANS of Iowa, Mr. EDWARDS of California, Mr. FAUNTROY, Mr. BROWN of California, Mr. STAGGERS, Mr. SYNAR, Mr. BARNARD, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. KILDEE, and Ms. MIKULSKI.

Companion legislation is being introduced in the Senate by the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY.

Television has become the eyes and ears of the world. It is one of the best ways we keep in touch and stay informed. But, for 16 to 18 million Americans who are deaf or hearing impaired, television has been a mute world. It has been a world with eyes, but no voice.

Imagine not being able to hear the local or national news. Imagine sitting down with your family to watch a movie. Everyone else is laughing or crying. Eager to be included, you ask what has happened, but your family, caught in the movie, motions you to wait.

In our society, television is more than a source of entertainment or news—it is the vitial communication link between our people, the source of lifesaving information on natural disasters, the center of our civil defense alert system.

For the deaf and hearing impaired, the mute world of television has isolated them from current events and from shared experiences with neighbors and family. It has isolated them from the everyday culture that shapes our daily lives.

The world of television is slowly being opened to the deaf and hearing impaired through a system called closed captioning. Closed captions, invisible unless triggered by a special decoding device, enable viewers to read on the TV screen what they cannot hear. The special decoding device is commonly referred to as a line 21 decoder.

Today, closed captioning has emerged as the universal system adopted by all three networks and PBS. However, after nearly half a decade of use, there are still only about 100,000 decoders in use.

For too long, the cost of decoders—approximately $250 each—has deterred the expansion of that market. Families with hearing impaired members, struggling to meet special medical and education costs, as well as the expenses that face all Americans, have been unable to purchase decoders.

The hearing impaired start at a financial disadvantage. The median income of families headed by the hearing impaired is 84 percent of the general level. The figure is even worse for those families headed by a woman. Their income is just 74 percent of the general level.

Working with representatives from the National Association for the Deaf, the National Captioning Institute, Gallaudet College, and each of the national television networks we have developed a proposal that would go far toward expanding the decoder market, and at a minimal cost.

The proposal would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 to provide an income tax credit for expenses incurred by an individual taxpayer for purchase of television subtitle equipment. Only purchases of the equipment for use by a hearing-impaired individual will qualify for the credit.

The tax credit would apply to all captioning systems, including line 21 and the special CBS system, Extravision, when it comes on line. It would apply whether or not the decoders are purchased separately or are already integrated into a television set.

The tax credit under the bill is not refundable. The credit is for 50 percent of the cost of the subtitle equipment, up to a maximum of $250. The bill is estimated to cost less than $6 million per year.

Last year, some 15,000 decoders were purchased. This bill is projected to immediately increase sales to 25,000 per year. That is not only a jump of 66 percent, it represents an increase of 25 percent in the total number of decoders in use. By 1989, nearly 40,000 decoders a year will be purchased.

Since use of the line 21 system began in 1979, the hearing impaired across America have worked hard to ensure its full implementation. Last year, following a landmark decision by CBS, all three networks and PBS have adopted line 21 closed captioning, creating a common and universal system.

That was a major breakthrough, yet no network, no matter how well intentioned, can maintain any programming absent a market. That is a hard fact to face, but it has a flip side as well. Given a strong market, no network will overlook the needs of the hearing impaired.

Now, as in the past, our Nation faces a basic choice. We can be one people, united by equal opportunity, sharing a common vision of hope, or we can let ourselves be divided into separate communities.

Wishing alone will not make us one people. We become one people because we pledge ourselves and our resources to the dream of equal opportunity; because we work to eliminate the barriers of access and communication that threaten to divide us.

Mr. Speaker, I call my colleagues' attention to the text of the bill, which follows:

H.R. —

A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 to provide an income tax credit for expenses incurred by an individual taxpayer for the purchase of television subtitle equipment to be used by a hearing-impaired individual

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. CREDIT FOR TELEVISION SUBTITLE EQUIPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (relating to nonrefundable personal credits is amended by inserting before section 26 the following new section:

"SEC. 25A. TELEVISION SUBTITLE EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY HEARING-IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS.

"(a) CREDIT ALLOWED.—In the case of an individual, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter for the taxable year an amount equal to 50 percent of the television subtitle equipment expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year.

"(b) MAXIMUM DOLLAR AMOUNT LIMITATION.—The amount of the credit allowed under subsection (a) for any taxable year shall not exceed $250 ($125 in the case of a married individual filing a separate return).

"(c) Definitions.—For purposes of this section—

"(1) TELEVISION SUBTITLE EQUIPMENT EXPENSES.—The term 'television subtitle equipment expenses' means any amount paid or incurred by the taxpayer for the purchase and installation of any television subtitle equipment for use by any hearing-impaired