



UA Quotes

for AIUSA activists, speakers & staff

Summer 2004

THESE STORIES from people whose lives have been touched by our efforts give names and faces to the worldwide impact of the Urgent Action Network of Amnesty International. We hope that the information in *UA Quotes* can be used to complement an AIUSA presentation or to inspire your continued letter-writing. You are welcome to copy any part of *UA Quotes* for others.

Sincerely,

**Scott Harrison, Ellen Moore, and Natasha Nummedal
for the Urgent Action Network**

*"I Will Carry On, in
Order That Justice
May be Done..."*

In January 2003, Urgent Action letter-writers sent thousands of appeals to Brazilian officials on behalf of Dr. Elma Novais and her children Jefferson and Roxana, following a campaign of threats and intimidation against them. This campaign appeared to be designed to intimidate Dr. Novais, who had been working tirelessly to bring to justice those responsible for killing her son, Josenildo João de Freitas Júnior. He was shot dead in Caruaru, Pernambuco, in 1999 by a group of men who witnesses described as military policemen, and who were believed to be members of a death squad. After the UA was issued, Dr. Novais'



Dr. Elma Novais and her children, Jefferson and Roxana, received death threats for investigating the death of Novais' son, Josenildo João de Freitas Júnior. Witnesses describe the group of men who shot her son as military policemen who were believed to be members of a death squad.

protection was switched from 12- to 24-hour.

Dr. Elma Novais wrote to

members of the Urgent Action Network: *"Thank you from my heart, I received your letters, a gesture of comfort and humanity, uniting strength to try and save our lives. The struggle has been difficult since I denounced the murderers of my son. We have suffered a lot of hardship and aggression, and have all been the target of much violence and threats. But thanks to the support of each one of you, I will carry on, in order that justice may be done, and that other children will not be killed and that such crimes will not go unpunished."*

[UA 8/03 issued Jan. 9, 2003]

*The Power of an
Urgent Action –
Before It Is Even
Issued!*

This message is from a member of the UA Team at Amnesty's International Secretariat in London: *"I wanted to share the success story of a UA that was drafted and edited today, but was not issued. The Russia Team sent us a draft UA about a prisoner, Stanislav Ryabchikov, who was being held in a punishment cell in poor conditions at a detention facility in Moscow, where he was being denied medical treatment for*

We issue *UA Quotes* periodically; if you or someone you know would like to join our *UA Quotes* mailing list, please let us know. Contact the Urgent Action office if you would like a paper or electronic copy of this *UA Quotes*.

Urgent Action Program Office

PO Box 1270
Nederland CO 80466 USA
ph: 303 258 1170
fax: 303 258 7881
e: uan@aiusa.org



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tuberculosis. The team had heard about the case from a Russian NGO, and was concerned for the man's health and well-being. Just as we were about to send out a UA on his behalf, the Russia Team heard that he had been released from the punishment cell, and was back in a

specialist wing of the prison for tuberculosis sufferers.

"The team told us that they felt the UA may have been a factor in his release, as both the team at the IS and the NGO in Russia had telephoned the detention facility a number of times to check the

fax numbers we were including in the UA. They think that this made the authorities aware that the international spotlight was about to be turned upon them, so they took action before this happened!

"There is no news on the state of

Nepal Urgent Actions Combat "Disappearances"

On August 27, 2003, the cease-fire between the government of Nepal and the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) broke down. With the resumption of the conflict came an alarming rise in human rights violations, particularly large numbers of arbitrary arrests, detentions, and "disappearances." Members of the security forces in plain clothes, suspected of belonging to the army, have been taking people into custody for "questioning," promising to return them "shortly." However, the vast majority of these people have then "disappeared." When relatives try to find them, the army denies they have these "disappeared" in their custody. Families have occasionally been told the location of their relatives through unofficial sources, giving them at least some hope that the detainees are still alive.

DESPITE THE LARGE NUMBER OF ARRESTS, however, we are beginning to see people being released, and there is some evidence that AI's Urgent Action Network is playing a significant role in this success. Since the end of the cease-fire, AI has issued numerous UAs on Nepal, covering about one hundred individual cases. Dozens of these people have been released. Many of those released report that security forces members have threatened them to not tell anyone about what they experienced or saw while in detention. Afraid for their lives,

". . . As a concerned citizen and a fellow human rights activist, I would like to thank you all for the hard work you are doing. Continue your efforts and do not get tired of doing good. Someday it will pay. Many lives have been saved by your efforts. If you had kept quiet, many more would have lost their lives and many more 13-year-old girls would have been raped and brutally killed. . ."

-- Excerpt from a letter a human rights activist in Nepal wrote to Amnesty International on March 9, 2004, regarding the large number of Nepal Urgent Actions in recent months.

many have understandably refused to talk; but a few former detainees have told tales of torture, including beatings with bamboo sticks, kickings, and suffocation using water. The UA Network has saved some persons from this fate. One individual told AI that after a UA was issued on his "disappearance," the torture stopped. The attitude of the security forces personnel towards him also changed. He was soon released. One foreign diplomat sent a personal e-mail to AI thanking the UA Network for intervening on behalf of an individual who had been tortured during a previous detention, saying that we had helped prevent an innocent man from being tortured for a second time.

We continue to issue Nepal UAs at a challenging rate; the pressure is building and officials are beginning to take notice. Thanks to the members of the Urgent Action Network, a real difference is being made. Everyone who has written a letter or fax to the Nepalese

authorities deserves congratulations for your hard work. The fight against torture and "disappearance" in Nepal continues. Please keep writing appeals, and please keep saving lives. Those listed below have been released recently in Nepal:

Subindra Buda Magar
Pashupati Dhungana
Udaya Raj Gautam
Shahasnath Adhikari
Lok Krishna Battarai
Dr Birendra Jhapali
Basu Dev Sigdel
Durga Prasai
Rakesh Prasai
Jujubhai Maharjan
Laxmi Pande
Lanka Bahadur Bishwakarma
Bal Bahadur Bishwakarma
Surya Bastakoti
Samundra Budathoki
Sitaram Tamang
Chandra Prasad Nepal
Sabitri Nepal
Deepak Thakuri
Chet Bahadur Thakuri
Syam Thakuri
Shankha Buddha Lama Lama
Ajeet Man Tamang

Stanislav Ryabchikov's health, and further action by Amnesty International may be needed on his case in the future, but it's great to be reminded of the power of UAs!"

22 Sudanese Men Appreciate Amnesty's Work

Abdel Aziz Abdul Kader, Mahdi Yaqub, Ahmed Abdul Rahman, Adam Hussain Mohammed Fadil, Adam Saleh, Musa Mohammed, Al-Haj Tirab Mahmoud, Mohamed Osman Al-Basha, Adam Dau Al-Bait Tur, Ali Musa Bakara, and eleven others were released on September 9, 2003. They expressed their thanks to members of Amnesty International who campaigned on their behalf.

[UA 251/03 issued Aug. 20, 2003]

Algerian Medical Doctor is Acquitted and Released

Doctor and human rights defender Salaheddine Sidhoum was acquitted on October 16, 2003, in a retrial of his earlier conviction *in absentia*. His original conviction had resulted in a sentence of twenty years' imprisonment. He went home and celebrated his acquittal and release with family and friends. An Amnesty International staff member who works on the Algeria team at the IS was able to speak with Salaheddine on the day he left Serkadji prison. He warmly thanked Amnesty International for the campaign that was launched in his support, which he said had given him a lot of strength. He also expressed his determination to

Tunisian Prisoner of Conscience Released



Former Tunisian Prisoner of Conscience, Zouheir Yahiaoui.

Following a relentless national and international campaign, Tunisian prisoner of conscience Zouheir Yahiaoui was conditionally released from prison on November 18, 2003. When he returned home, he found out from his family and through the internet that he had received immense international support. He said,

"I thank everybody for what they have done for me. I like what Amnesty International does. There are so many prisoners who suffer in Tunisian prisons. The work of Amnesty International's members is good and it is important."

[UA 190/03 issued Jun. 27 & re-issued Jul. 4, 2003]

continue his work for human rights in Algeria in order to contribute to establishing the truth about all the crimes that have been committed in his country.

[Medical Action # MA 15/03 issued Oct. 8, 2003]

Five Political Leaders in Gabon Thank AI Members for Their Release

Hughes Bessacque, Brice Obanda, Gervais Amogo, Abdul Allogo Mintsu, and Pascal Nkoulou, five members of the Gabonese opposition party Bongo Doit Partir (BDP), Bongo Must Go (or BDP-Gabon Nouveau), were released on October 1, 2003, after three months of detention. They have been reunited with their families and are generally in good health, although they did suffer some health problems during their imprisonment. They had been charged with threatening state security and insulting the head of state. Most, if not all, of them were released without charge. In a press release BDP-Gabon

Nouveau's leader thanked members of Amnesty International and others for having put pressure on the government, as this was a factor in their release.

[UA 240/03 issued Aug. 13, 2003]

UA Letters Help Prevent Amputation of Foot and Hand of 16 Year Old in Sudan

The sentence of cross amputation passed on 16-year-old Mohamed Hassan Hamdan, member of the Ja'afra ethnic group (an Arab group in South Darfur), was quashed in December 2003 by the Appeal Court in Nyala, South Darfur State, on the grounds that the accused was a child. The sentence was commuted to a year of imprisonment in a reformatory. Mohamed Hassan Hamdan has now been sent to a reformatory in Khartoum. External pressure from the UA Network was reportedly one factor that led authorities to reconsider the sentence.

[UA 309/03 issued Oct. 30, 2003]

**AI Secretary
General
Presents
President of
Brazil with 'his'
UA**

Urgent Action 64/80 had been issued on April 24, 1980, following the arrest and incommunicado detention of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and several other trade unionists. At the time, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was a trade union



AI Secretary General Irene Khan presents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil's current president, with the Urgent Action Amnesty International issued on his behalf during the 1980s.

leader for the São Bernardo and Diadema Metal Workers' Union.

[UA 64/80 issued Apr. 24, 1980]

**A Happy Birthday in
the Russian
Federation**

Khamzat Osmaev, who "disappeared" on January 12, 2004, was returned to his family in Ingushetia on January 27, a day after his 50th birthday. He and his family are grateful for the worldwide support they received, which they believe was crucial in securing his release. A member of the Russian human rights organization *Memorial* spoke to Khamzat Osmaev, who said that for most of the time he had been kept handcuffed and with a bag over his head in a dark, damp cellar. He said it was very difficult to lie down, he was beaten, and he suffered other forms of torture and ill-treatment. He was questioned about his involvement with a Chechen field commander, who appears next to him in a photograph from the early 1990s. Soldiers who released Khamzat Osmaev near his village in Ingushetia apologized, saying that they found out he was not a supporter of the

field commander.

[UA 21/04 issued Jan. 14, 2004]

**Facilities at Juvenile
Detention Center in
Brazil Improve**

On January 22, an Urgent Action was issued on behalf of adolescents held at juvenile detention centers in São Paulo State following reports that they had been tortured and ill-treated by wardens, and that two had been shot dead in escape attempts. Amnesty International received a reply from Professor Marcos Antônio Monteiro, the President of the *Fundação do Bem-Estar do Menor* (FEBEM), Foundation for the Well-being of Minors, juvenile detention system in São Paulo. He stated that he was committed to administrative reform and that the "*FEBEM - SP is striving to ensure the reform and improvement of the institution*". He added that the São Paulo State government is investing in the construction of new centers, which will be "*small in size, equipped with*

facilities for sporting, recreational and educational activities, and will enable the separation of detainees according to age, physical development and seriousness of crime committed. Three new units were opened on March 1. The reply does not mention the specific shootings and incidents of torture raised in January's Urgent Action. According to NGOs in São Paulo, although conditions within Unit 5 of Tatuapé, where at least 60 detainees reportedly complained of being tortured, have improved, conditions in Unit 12 remain very tense. The association of mothers of FEBEM detainees, AMAR, thanked Amnesty International members for their letters of support.

[UA 28/04 issued Jan. 22, 2004]

**Opposition Leader in
Nigeria Freed**

Opposition leader Buba Galadima, a member of the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) and chairman of the mobilization committee of the CNPP, was to be involved in a May 3 anti-government protest in the capital Abuja, marching against a range of issues such as election rigging, corruption, poverty, and crime. Abuja police refused permission for the march to go ahead, and intelligence officers from the State Security Services arrested Buba Galadima at his office on the evening of April 29. Buba Galadima was released without charge on May 13. The Special Assistant to the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice told Amnesty International that they had received many letters from AI members.

[UA 162/04 issued Apr. 30, 2004]

Bahraini National Released from Prison in Saudi Arabia

Sheikh Mohamed Saleh Ali was released from *Madinah* prison, near Mecca, on April 18, following nine months of being held without charge, trial, or access to a lawyer. Sheikh Mohamed Saleh Ali has since returned to Bahrain and his friends have sent a message to Amnesty International thanking all those who worked on his case.

[UA 33/04 issued Feb. 4, 2004]

Critic of Syrian Treatment of the Kurds Released

School teacher and writer Muhammad Ghanem was released on the night of April 3, 2004, after 13 days in detention. It was believed he was arrested for publishing articles critical of the recent killing of Syrian Kurds by the security forces and the continuation of the State of Emergency in Syria. In a telephone call with *al-Hayat* newspaper, Muhammad Ghanem said, "I was not requested to give a written apology; rather they asked me to explain my articles on the internet in which I called for the [Syrian] Kurds to be given nationality and to be allowed to revive some of their traditional activities. But I never called for violence and I don't agree with it." Muhammad Ghanem added that he had been transferred from al-Raqqa in northern Syria to Deir al-Zur in the east, and to the capital Damascus. For 13 days he had not been allowed to eat, causing him digestive and other health problems. "The last time I ate was at home, and then the next time was [here] with my wife and children," he said.

[UA 134/04 issued Apr 1, 2004]

AI France's Youth Network Shows Two Sides of Urgent Actions

-- Many thanks to Cathy Mayor, the French UA coordinator, for translating this article. The article first appeared in AI France's publication, *La Depeche des AU*.

"SOLIDAYS" IS AN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL for young people aimed at developing solidarity with those affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2003, it took place on July 6 and 7 in the Longchamp Hippodrome in Paris. The French AI youth network built on its previous year's success of running a stall by this year creating an "alternative space" for activists.

The young people involved were members of the French AI youth network from Paris and beyond. They decided to use the recent thirtieth anniversary of the Urgent Action Network to share information with young festival-goers about the UA technique. To demonstrate this, they constructed a scenario, contrasting the prisoner in his remote cell with a peaceful lounge where members of the UA Network could write letters on the spot on behalf of prisoners.

THE "CELL" USED A BLACK CURTAIN, a pallet and bars on one of the "walls," with two postbags filled up with letters ready to be sent. In the more comfortable lounge, there were brightly-colored curtains, a bookcase full of books and ornaments, as well as two small tables with chairs. It was a friendly space where visitors could sit, read UAs and sign model letters. A large display-board explained what UAs are and how they work, the history of the first UA, other good news stories and some figures about UA effectiveness.

The mission was to give visitors clear information about UAs and encourage them to write one on the spot in a few minutes to demonstrate the way it works. After writing letters, the visitors were given the opportunity to join the UA Network. To show the scope of Amnesty International's human rights work, five cases were selected, each from a different continent. One involved a "disappearance" case in Russia (Chechnya), another a prisoner of conscience in Equatorial Guinea, a case of detention without charge in Israel/Occupied Territories, a "fear for safety" case in Venezuela and a case of children under gun fire in Laos.

NEARLY ONE THOUSAND VISITORS visited the UA stand during the two days of the festival. Three hundred and eighty letters were sent on the five cases. Letter writers were able to talk to the organizers about the cases or find out more about AI's work in other countries. The young organizers succeeded in using this opportunity to bring UAs to the attention of the young festival-goers, and their creativity will surely inspire others for next summer.

Conditions Improve Rapidly for Patients in Romania's Poiana Mare Psychiatric Hospital

On February 20, we issued an Urgent Action about *Poiana Mare* psychiatric hospital, in which 17 people had died since the beginning of 2004. The research team reported that the publicity in the Romanian media given to this action was extensive, and the pressure on the Romanian authorities from our letter-writing played a considerable part in achieving some important results:

- The director of the hospital was replaced and some additional resources reportedly were immediately allocated to improve diet and general living conditions.
- A special commission of the Ministries of Health and Justice was tasked to investigate the situation in *Poiana Mare* and in five other high-security hospitals.
- On March 11, the Ministry of Health also announced that it was initiating a thorough assessment of all facilities that would begin in mid-April 2004.
- Separate criminal investigations into the deaths of patients have also been initiated.
- On May 17, 2004, Amnesty International headquarters in London received a letter from Prime Minister Adrian Nastase informing AI that 21 patients had died in the hospitals in the six weeks between January 1 and February 17, 2004. Post-mortem examinations had been carried out promptly in only four cases. In 17 cases the hospital administration appar-

ently did not consider the cause of deaths to be suspicious and did not report them to competent judicial authorities. But as a result of Amnesty International's intervention, a criminal investigation into each of the 17 cases has now been initiated: "In all these cases, investigations preliminary to the criminal prosecution shall be carried out. They shall consist of hearings, ordering investigation activities with regard to the documents and

forensic expertise on corpses, as the case may be, seizures of documents, etc."

- A month after issuing the Urgent Action, a secret video was filmed in which patients at *Poiana Mare* hospital talk about their lives and the appalling conditions they have to endure. To view a two-minute clip from this video, visit <http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/ENGEUR395042004>.

[UA 71/04 issued Feb. 20, 2004]

Ending the Death Penalty: Saving Lives

By recognizing that all people have rights and that justice is never served by state-sponsored executions, governments are taking important steps to end international human rights violations and protect the rights of all their citizens. We hope that the following stories help inspire you to continue writing letters to stop pending executions. It's inspiring to see countries start to review their policies regarding capital punishment, as we work to help save one life at a time.

Uzbek Mother Visits the Urgent Action Office in London

"We offer our gratitude and respect to the UA Network. Your help and support means so much... and all of a sudden we're no longer alone, we're surrounded by people who want to help." These were the words of Tamara Chikunova, the mother of Dmitry Chikunov who was executed in Uzbekistan following an unfair trial on July 10, 2000. Ms. Chikunova visited the UA Team at Amnesty International's headquarters in London on April 7, 2003. Since Dmitry's execution, Tamara has been working to abolish the death penalty in Uzbekistan, and has

founded Mothers Against the Death Penalty. Since the group's founding, ten men have had their death sentences commuted following action by the UA Network and by local pressure from groups such as the Mothers.

[UA 184/00 issued Jun. 28, 2000]

Death Sentence of Kentucky Man Is Commuted

On December 8, 2003, his final day in office, the Governor of Kentucky commuted the death sentence of Kevin Stanford to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. He did so because

Kevin Stanford was under 18 years old at the time of the murder for which he was convicted over two decades ago. At a press conference on December 8, Governor Patton said that he was *“still getting a lot of pressure”* on the case. Kevin Stanford’s lawyer expresses her thanks to all who sent appeals.

[EX 52/03 issued Dec. 4, 2003]

Kazakstan President Announces a Moratorium

On December 18, 2003, the one-year reprieve on the death sentences of Mikhail Vershinin, Evgeniy Turochkin and Sergey Kopay expired, leading to concerns that they could be executed at any time. On the same day, it was announced that the President of Kazakstan had signed a moratorium on executions the previous evening. The moratorium was due to come into force on December 19, 2003. When Mikhail Vershinin’s father, Sergey, heard the news, he wrote to Amnesty International, *“Today the event that we have all been waiting for yet feared might never happen took place. I can hardly take it in. But it has happened. Mikhail’s life has been saved!”* The President decreed that the moratorium on executions would be in place until legislation to enshrine the full abolition of the death penalty is introduced in 2004. The General Procuracy has been instructed to review all existing death sentences. Appeals written by members of the UA network on behalf of the three men alerted the European Union (EU) to the imminent danger of execution of the three. On December 11, 2003, the EU issued an official statement expressing concern at alleged executions in Kazakstan in October and November 2003, and calling on



The lives of Evgeny Gugin (left) and Abror Isaev (right) were spared following the commutation of their sentences to 20 years’ imprisonment in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan Commutes Death Sentences of Two Young Men

Evgeny Gugin’s death sentence has been commuted to 20 years’ imprisonment in Uzbekistan. On April 23, 2004, staff at the Main Administration for the Execution of Punishments told Evgeny Gugin’s mother that his death sentence had been overturned, and that he had been transferred from death row to the prison in the town of Andizhan in the Ferghana valley, near his home town, on April 15. *“We cried and laughed for days and nights out of joy,”* said Evgeny Gugin’s grandmother on April 28, *“We are so happy and want to thank everybody who made this possible.”*

Abror Isaev’s death sentence also has been commuted to 20 years’ imprisonment. Abror Isaev’s mother received a letter from the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan on April 27, 2004, informing her that the Plenum of the Supreme Court had reduced his death sentence to 20 years’ imprisonment. *“This means that God exists. I hope that all other death row prisoners will be given life also. Thank you so much for your support. I wouldn’t have been able to go through all of this on my own,”* she told Amnesty International on April 28, 2004. There were strong indications that Abror Isaev became mentally disturbed while on death row. His mother told Amnesty International in May 2003: *“Abror was completely beside himself [when I visited him in April]. He whispered to me that the prison guards had told him right before the visit that they were taking him to be shot.... When I visited him again in May, I knocked at the glass screen between us and dangled a thread in front of his eyes, but his eyes did not follow. I said ‘It is mama’, but he did not recognize me. He was humming and had his eyes fixed on the ceiling.”* His mother told Amnesty International on April 29: *“Abror still does not speak and he still does not recognize me. He behaves like a little child. I don’t even know whether he understands that he is not in danger of execution anymore.”*

[Evgeny Gugin: EX 5/03 issued Jan. 15, 2003 & re-issued Mar. 7, 2003, Jun. 24, 2003 & Apr. 29, 2004; Abror Isaev: UA 129/03 issued May 9, 2003 & re-issued Jun. 24, Jul. 7, 2003 & Apr. 29, 2004]

the Kazak President to institute a moratorium on executions. Mikhail Vershinin’s family, who had placed its only hopes of stopping his execution on the intervention of the international community and Amnesty International, expressed its gratitude to all those who had written appeals: *“Thank you enormously for all your efforts. We send you our most heartfelt words of thanks and*

wish you happiness.”

[UA 148/02 issued May 17, 2002 & re-issued Nov. 11, 2002, Feb. 21, 2003 & Nov. 27, 2003]

Tajikistan President Stops Execution

Abduali Kurbanov was in imminent danger of execution

when we issued an Urgent Action on his behalf. The UN Human Rights Committee had called for him to be retried in open and fair proceedings. While serving a prison sentence for fraud in 2001, he was allegedly tortured and forced to confess to three murders. In March 2002 he was sentenced to death, with no effective right of appeal. Six days after we issued the UA, President Rakhmonov issued a stay of execution. To Amnesty International's knowledge, this is the first time an execution has been stopped in Tajikistan at such a late stage.

[UA 97/04 issued Mar. 4, 2004]

Mexico President Commutes a Man's Death Sentence

President Vicente Fox issued a statement on November 19, 2003, clarifying that he would ensure the commutation of the death sentence handed down by a military tribunal against Herón Varela Flores. Herón Varela Flores had been found guilty of the murder of Colonel Salvador Juárez Villa on February 14, 2003, at the barracks of the 20th Infantry Regiment in Ciudad Juarez, northern Mexico. He alleges that he acted in self-defence and that the military tribunal denied him a fair trial. AI's researcher on Mexico said, "Not only have members of the Urgent Action Network successfully helped bring pressure to bear on this particular case, they have sent an important reminder to the Mexican government that while its international stance against the death penalty is extremely important, it must also abolish the death penalty from the statute books in Mexican domestic legislation"

[UA 335/03 issued Nov. 17, 2003]

Contact the UA Office to receive a Children's Edition UA packet for the young students in your life!

UA Workplace Group

UA letter-writing groups can crop up in the most unusual of places. From kitchen tables, to church basements, to classrooms, we are always delighted to hear from those who organize groups. Jim Kunen, an Urgent Action activist who coordinates Urgent Action ~~letter-writing for employees of~~ AOL Time Warner, recently wrote:

"The AOL Time Warner Amnesty International group meets on the first Thursday every other month. We have been doing this for more than three years.

As the group leader, I select two Urgent Actions that are current and, usually, of particular interest to our group because they deal with a journalist or creative artist. I take the Urgent Action bulletins and edit them down for brevity and simplicity; a colleague then prints up a couple of dozen copies of each to take to the meeting to the 50 or so AOL Time Warner employees who have come to a meeting in the past and have affirmatively asked to remain on the list. They are all encouraged to bring colleagues, which is how we replace burned out members. (In addition, I post a notice of the meeting on the Company Intranet, though that has been much less effective than word-of-mouth as a recruitment device.) Anywhere from 7 to 35 people actually show up to write.

Note: I could easily e-mail everybody any or all Urgent Action bulletins, but I do not. Experience has shown that, given that option, people will choose to receive the e-mail and write the letter on their own time, rather than attend a meeting. The only problem is that, despite their best intentions, they won't write the letter. I know I wouldn't. This is the reason we started the meetings in the first place: you come to the meeting, and when you leave that room, the letter has been written, addressed and stamped.

AOL Time Warner strongly supports our efforts. The company recognized our group by giving me a public service award this spring (2003) and making a \$3,000 company contribution to AI. The award generated a great deal of internal publicity, which has re-energized the group and attracted new members."

8880 Southpark Ave.
Happy, WI 55554

January 20, 2004

Dear Ser or Maim:

May I have a Children's Edition UA Pack please? I feel very bad for those children that are getting hurt all over the world. So I would like to help them.

Sincerely,
Ally Anderson

