

Amnesty International

AI@50 HIGHLIGHTS SCRIPT

[ENGLISH]

[06:50 MIN]

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00:05 VO

Today, no voice need go unheard. Ordinary people are armed with a belief that they are not alone. Through the power of Facebook, twitter and even Wikileaks, thousands of voices have joined together to bring countries to their knees.

00:22 VO

Is this force a new phenomenon?

00:25 VO

50 years ago, Amnesty International launched one of the 1st ever social networks of activists in the world.

00:35 Voice of Peter Benenson

“Be of good comfort. We have today lit such a candle that shall never be put out.”

00:42 VO

Since 1961, people across the globe have joined forces and demanded action on over 44 thousand cases.

00:52 VO

Peter Benenson sparked a movement of 3 million people into life from his barristers office in London.

01:00 Peter Benenson

“I was spurred into that by reading an article about how two Portuguese students had been arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for drinking a toast to liberty in a Lisbon restaurant. That so outraged me at the time.”

01:16 Peter Benenson

“I walked up the steps of St Martins in the Field church out of the underground and went in to see what could be done to really be done effectively to mobilise world opinion.”

01:31 VO

Long before facebook, before mobile phones or emails, letters have crossed the world demanding justice for people in urgent need. Messages from people they've never met.

01:42 Aung San Suu Kyi

“Again and again we reiterate that the release of political prisoners is the most important thing for all those who truly wish to bring about change in Burma.”

01:55 VO

For over 20 years Amnesty members campaigned for Aung San Suu Kyi to win back her freedom.

02:02 VO

When Vaclav Havel was imprisoned in 1979 - simply for his beliefs - a worldwide network of activists refused to forget about him.

02:11 Vaclav Havel

“It's up to all of us to try, and those that say that individuals are not capable of changing anything are only looking for excuses.”

02:34 VO

When he left jail, Vaclav Havel eventually became president of a new Czech Republic.

02:42 VO

When thousands across Eastern Europe tore down the barriers that held them apart, grandmothers, students and businessmen around the globe united together in support. Their faxes helped break down brick walls, and knew no borders.

03:00 VO

Today, in many countries, people still risk their lives to gather and speak out against regimes that rule them at gunpoint. A million supporters have already signed Amnesty's demand for an international Arms Trade Treaty, so we can keep the weapons out of their hands for good.

03:21 VO

Fear comes in many forms. Today, millions living in poverty know that losing your freedom can mean living without a voice, without food and in constant fear.

03:34 VO

Mothers in Sierra Leone are standing up for their right to live without fear of death during childbirth, after joining a campaign to make free healthcare a reality.

03:48 VO

A worldwide campaign made sure the Mexican government could no longer ignore women and children being murdered in their hundreds in Ciudad Juarez.

03:58 Norma Ledesma

“We are afraid, fear abounds, but we will continue to fight...”

04:04 VO

In the next 12 months, Amnesty members will join the fight for women and girls' rights in Nicaragua, in support of rape victims who are currently forbidden from seeking abortion.

04:16 VO

Elsewhere in Latin America, Amnesty's work will never be forgotten by victims of torture and repression by regimes now long dead.

04:27 VO

In 1975 Amnesty helped convince the UN to act.

04:31 Voice of United Nations speaker

May I take it that the assembly wishes to adopt the convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment? It is so decided.

04:45 VO

Two years later, worldwide recognition came with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

04:51 VO

Not everyone was so impressed. Scathing criticisms of Amnesty activists were hurled everywhere from the US to Soviet Russia.

05:01 Text onscreen

Amnesty International is “maintained by imperialist secret services”

05:05 VO

Undaunted, over a million people signed petitions to the UN to free all prisoners of conscience.

05:14 VO

31 years ago, Amnesty members began a relentless fight against the death penalty, which has helped end executions in 87 countries.

05:23 MC Solar

“...in the name of his friends around the world, Mr President I ask you to free Kim Song Man.”

05:33 Kim Song Man

“I had been thrown all alone into a dark tunnel forever and they sent me letters from the outside to keep my spirits up, to hang in there.”

05:51 Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International

“It’s only when you have millions of people coming together and the hard research and evidence that Amnesty brings to bare – that combination is what is going to crack the challenges of the future.”

06:03 VO

Millions of ordinary people have already joined forces to make sure Guantanamo will not be hidden from view, to shine a light on the forgotten prisoners of China, to create an International Criminal Court where no one can hide from the law.

06:28 VO

With a 50-year head start and a network of supporters in over 150 countries, the question is: what will we do next?

06:42 Logo

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL 50 YEARS

06:50 END