

Update on 2006 Holiday Card Action

ALGERIA ... Hassiba Boumerdesi and Amine Sidhoum, both lawyers and human rights defenders, were acquitted of the charges against them in April 2007. A month earlier, Hassiba had told visiting Amnesty International representatives that she had received 1,602 cards and letters. In December of last year, she wrote to Amnesty,

“I would like to thank you again for the wonderful work you have done to support us. The fact that I receive cards daily is the proof of the great mobilization of many persons by Amnesty International. ... Each time I read a message I thank you.”

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC ... Opposition politician Claude Yabanda was released from prison in November 2006 and left the Central African Republic to live in Europe. He is grateful to Amnesty International members for their support and action on his behalf.

INDONESIA ... All six trade unionists featured in last year’s Holiday Card Action have been released from prison. Indonesian authorities released four of them -- Sruhas Towo, Suyahman, Safrudin and Akhen Pane – in late October 2006. Masry Sebayang and Robin Kimbi were freed in May 2007. Amnesty International learned that the unionists were astonished and greatly moved to have received cards of support from people, including schoolchildren, in the United States and elsewhere. Masry Sebayang and Robin Kimbi sent a message to Amnesty saying:

“We have received so many postcards which have really given us strength, but there is no way that we can reply to them all. It's so important to us to say thank you so much to everyone for all the care and support you've given us. We feel so much in debt to you all but only God can repay you all what you have done for us, and may he bless you all.”