



## NGOs

### Greenpeace and Amnesty

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#### Greenpeace Introduction and Summary

Greenpeace is an international environmentalist non-governmental organization that uses non-violent methods to combat environmental destruction resulting from unchecked industrialization and development. The key issues and practices that the group is currently focused on defeating include: global warming, nuclear energy, destruction of the world's oceans and forests, unsustainable agricultural practices, and the use of toxic agents in products and manufacturing processes. Greenpeace works to educate policy makers and the populace on environmental dangers and implications of certain practices and legislation, with the hopes of promoting more environmentally minded political outcomes. Greenpeace attempts to maintain a non-partisan affiliation by refusing to accept donations from political parties or governments. Greenpeace is most frequently criticized for leading campaigns and promoting policies that rely on unfounded and questionable scientific claims.

#### Greenpeace Recent Developments and Questions to Consider

##### *Climate Change*

Greenpeace has published a series of editions of its "Guide to Greener Electronics," in which it ranks technology companies according to their use and elimination of toxic chemicals and unsustainable manufacturing processes, over the past 5 years. The most recent 14<sup>th</sup> Edition has sparked considerable controversy, as companies protest that Greenpeace's claims are unfounded and biased. However, proponents and opponents alike recognize that the publication of the list has caused both companies and consumers to pay more attention to the use of hazardous chemicals in electrical consumer products, and may result in increased regulation in this area.

##### *Nuclear Power*

Greenpeace has engaged in its fight against nuclear power with renewed fervor following the 2010 State of the Union address by President Barack Obama, in which the president praised the further development "safe, clean" nuclear power plants. The organization emphasizes that while it supports Obama's goals for renewable energy development, it refuses to condone nuclear development due to the environmental dangers of radioactive waste. Obama and other officials need to stop compromising when it comes to energy development, according to Greenpeace, because there is no "safe amount" of radioactive waste.

##### *Fight Against Target*

Greenpeace celebrated a recent victory in sustainable agriculture when one of the US's largest retailers, Target Corporation, banned the sale of all farmed salmon products from its shelves. Greenpeace is using this policy change in order to encourage other retailers to limit their offerings to products that do not threaten the environment either by unsustainable agricultural prac-

tices or by release of toxins.

Although E.U. nations have taken steps in the right direction by granting financial aid to developing nations in the battle against global warming, Greenpeace maintains that much more is needed for the plan to be successful. Developing countries have refused to sign a global UN treaty pledging emission cuts unless wealthier nations help them meet these goals, and the current offers of €3 to €12 billion annually is far below the values needed to make a notable difference in the technologies and capabilities of these nations. The EU's commissioner for the environment, Stavros Dimas, estimates that €100 billion in funds will be needed in developing countries by 2020, and Greenpeace is working to put political pressure on developed nations to increase their contributions to this cause.

## **Amnesty International Introduction and Summary**

Amnesty International (A.I.) is an international non-governmental organization focused on protecting the human rights, outlined in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (UDHR), of all individuals. The organization works to educate policy makers, economic and social leaders, and the general public about human rights violations taking place all over the world, and to pressure these parties to take action against those guilty of perpetrating or condoning these immoral practices. A.I.'s main goals include protecting the rights of women, the poor, migrants, and refugees; abolishing the death penalty; exposing and repealing policies of torture; and controlling the global arms trade. The group is financially self sufficient, and does not take sides with any particular political group or government structure.

## **Amnesty International Recent Developments and Questions to Consider**

### *Earthquake in Haiti*

The devastating earthquake in Haiti has exposed and exacerbated many of the nation's human rights violations. Orphaned children are unprotected and particularly vulnerable to abduction by child traffickers at this time. Similarly, women have been increasingly subject to sexual abuse and violence by human traffickers. The nation's law enforcement agencies are even weaker than usual, and as a result, the international community must aid in protecting the nation's most vulnerable. Haiti's extreme poverty leaves much of its citizens without access to basic healthcare and welfare, and the international community must also contribute to the establishment of such institutions critical to the protection of all basic rights.

### *Human Rights*

Amnesty International is condemning the arrest and harassment of Sri Lankan opposition supporters and human rights activists in the wake of the January 2010 presidential election. Human rights activists now live in constant fear, and the government is holding many of them captive for allegedly planning a coup d'état. Newspapers and reporters supporting the release of detained activists have also been arrested and attacked as a result of their views. The Sri Lankan government is doing little to bring the perpetrators of these attacks to justice, and A.I. urges the world to put international pressure on the government to end the abuse of dissenters and protect the human right to free speech.

The United Nations, using numerous Amnesty International studies, has recently released a report on the widespread use of secret detention to combat terrorism. AI maintains that this practice needs to end immediately because it is a severe violation of humanitarian law. The report exposes various cases of US secret detentions and degrading criminal treatment in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks as part of the nation's "War on Terror," condemning the world leader for setting a poor example for developing nations. The organization points to recent cases of human disappearances and indefinite detention in Lithuania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia, and has been urging both local leaders and the international community to exert pressure on the local political leaders to expose and end these practices.

## **Bibliography**

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