

New Amnesty International Song Video The Price Of Silence

Written by Robert ID4575

Friday, 12 December 2008 04:47 -

A young woman, scaling the Himalayas on foot, flees the Chinese work camp where she was born, her tiny son in tow. A boy, forced to fight in Sudan's bloody civil war at age six, winds up in a refugee camp where he regains his dignity, but not his childhood. An outspoken singer is compelled to leave Zimbabwe in the wake of police intimidation at her concerts and a pervasive atmosphere of political and economic repression.

These are some of the real-life stories of the artists who created The Price of Silence, a collaborative project marking the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and produced by Link TV: Television Without Borders.

The song, based on the Grammy-winning Colombian group Aterciopelados' "Canción Protesta," is produced by Andres Levin, co-founder of Music Has No Enemies. A special EP featuring the full track along with a radio edit, a Spanish version and the original "Canción Protesta" song is available for \$1.99 exclusively at iTunes starting today, Dec. 9. Net proceeds will benefit Amnesty International.

The video, directed by Joshua Atesh Litle and set in the United Nations General Assembly, is an urgent plea to renew the commitment to human rights everywhere. It will premiere nationally on Link TV and will air regularly on the channel starting Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 9:45 p.m. ET/6:45 p.m. PT (available on DIRECTV channel 375, DISH Network channel 9410 and select urban cable systems). Link TV will also stream the video in its entirety at www.LinkTV.org . Amnesty International USA will stream the video at www.ProtectTheHuman.org

"Sixty years after the original signing, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has proven to be a true agent of change, helping lay the groundwork for rights-based movements worldwide," said Larry Cox, executive director for Amnesty International USA. "Still, each day throughout the world there are countless instances in which basic rights are being denied. Our only chance to turn the tide is by raising our voices in unison, then taking decisive action. Amnesty International has proven that grassroots activism works. Through this video, we call on citizens of the world to rededicate themselves to bring justice to all."

Fueled by an irresistible beat, The Price of Silence brings together a globe-spanning juggernaut

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of renowned artists, including musicians who have experienced human rights violations and all of whom are activists: Stephen Marley (Jamaica), Natalie Merchant (U.S.), Julieta Venegas (Mexico), Aterciopelados (Colombia), Chali 2na from Jurassic 5 (U.S.), Angelique Kidjo (Benin), Chiwoniso (Zimbabwe), Emmanuel Jal (Sudan), Yungchen Lhamo (Tibet/U.S.), Hugh Masekela (South Africa), Natacha Atlas (U.K./Egypt), Rachid Taha (Algeria/France), Kiran Ahluwalia (Canada/India), and Cucu Diamantes and Pedro Martinez of Yerba Buena (U.S./Cuba). Actor Laurence Fishburne sets up the song with a prologue written for the video by poet Alicia Partnoy, who spent two years in prison during Argentina's Dirty War.

Even more compelling than the list of musicians who donated their talents to the project is the silent list of those who wanted to participate. "We contacted artists who had the will, but ultimately couldn't get involved because they or their families would have been in danger," explains Steven Lawrence, vice president for music and cultural programming for Link TV, who developed and produced the video. "In one case, we couldn't even directly mention the project in our emails to a certain Central Asian musician because of government surveillance. We had to communicate in code."

The first person to record for the project was Emmanuel Jal, Sudanese hip hop rap artist and former child soldier, who recorded the day after he spoke to the U.N. General Assembly about his brutal, lost childhood. His personal plea set the standard for everything that followed. While artists like Jal, Angelique Kidjo, Natalie Merchant, Aterciopelados, and Stephen Marley (second son of Bob) address human rights straight up, many of the other artists express themselves through their own languages and traditions.

Tibetan exile Yungchen Lhamo sings a Buddhist prayer for peace. Zimbabwean singer Chiwoniso shouts out for freedom in Shona. Rachid Taha and Kiran Ahluwalia are interwoven, singing respectively in Arabic and Urdu, followed later by Natacha Atlas who adds her arching Arabic melisma to the track. Yerba Buena brought a joyful Yoruban chant to the mix. And Andrea Echeverri of Aterciopelados wrote a Spanish chorus and two verses, which she delivers along with Julieta Venegas.

Jal is not the only MC on The Price of Silence. Hugh Masekela, the South African jazz icon, who was an exile from his homeland for many years during apartheid, contributes a hip hop rap-like chant filmed on a roof in Johannesburg. And American hip-hop artist Chali 2na adds his own penetrating bass voice, urging the U.N. delegates to "Jump up" and "end the killing and the genocide." The Price of Silence is about more than identifying the wrongs; it's about the strength of the human spirit to sing out and right them.

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Though the artists address difficult and painful subjects, a positive, life-affirming quality radiates through their performances, as the video turns the U.N. General Assembly hall into a dance party for global human rights. Moved by the musicians' message, the U.N. delegates in the video first listen then are gradually overtaken by the energy and message of the song until they are dancing and singing along.

The video will be launched online and at events worldwide beginning the first week in December, including at a meeting of The Elders in Paris on Dec. 6 to celebrate the "Every Human Has Rights" campaign with Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khan, former President Jimmy Carter, Mary Robinson, and other world leaders.