Bianca Jagger
Biography

Bianca Jagger is Founder and Chair of the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, a Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador, a Member of the Executive Director's Leadership Council of Amnesty International, USA, a Member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, IUCN Plant a Pledge Ambassador, a member of the Women and Girls Lead Leadership Council and a Trustee of the Amazon Charitable Trust. For over three decades she has been a voice for the most vulnerable members of society, campaigning for human rights, civil liberties, peace, social justice and environmental protection throughout the world.

Bianca Jagger is the recipient of numerous prestigious international awards for her human rights and humanitarian work, including: in 2004, the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the “alternative Nobel prize” for “her long-standing commitment and dedicated campaigning over a wide range of issues of human rights, social justice and environmental protection, including the abolition of the death penalty, the prevention of child abuse, the rights of indigenous peoples and the environment that supports them, and the prevention and healing of armed conflicts”. In 1997, the Amnesty International USA Media Spotlight Award for Leadership, “in recognition for her work on behalf of human rights around the world, exposing and focusing attention on injustice”. In 1994, The United Nations Earth Day International Award for “her successful efforts to protect the livelihood of the indigenous peoples of Latin America, stopping the rain forest destruction in Nicaragua and Honduras”. In 2006, the World Citizenship Award from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. In 2004, she was presented with the World Achievement Award by Mikhail Gorbachev. In 1997, the Green Globe Award from the Rainbow Alliance "for her environmental campaigning". In 1998, she was awarded the American Civil Liberties Union Award, for “her commitment to international human rights, opposition to capital punishment and the promotion of civil rights.”

Bianca Jagger has been awarded three doctorates, honoris causa: a Doctorate in Law from the University of East London in 2010, a Doctorate of Human Rights from Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts in 2008; and a Doctorate of Humanities from Stonehill College, Massachusetts in 1983.

Early life and Work
Bianca Jagger was born **Bianca Pérez-Mora Macias** in 1950, in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. She was raised by her mother after her parents’ divorce. Witnessing the discrimination her mother encountered as a single working woman in a patriarchal society inspired her to become an instrument of change. She was determined never to be regarded as a second-class citizen because of her gender.

As a teenager, she participated in student demonstrations against the atrocities perpetrated by President Anastasio Somoza's National Guard. This inspired her to pursue her interest in politics. She won an academic scholarship to study political science at the **Institute of Political Science in Paris, France**. It was there that she discovered the value of freedom and democracy, the rule of law, judicial review, habeas corpus and respect for human rights - concepts she had only dreamt about in Nicaragua.

She married Mick Jagger in 1971. The following year, Ms. Jagger returned to Nicaragua to look for her parents after a devastating earthquake destroyed **Managua**, killing 10,000 people, injuring 20,000 and leaving approximately 200,000 homeless. The earthquake reached 6.5 on the Richter scale and sparked huge fires. Some of the victims who survived the initial shock later perished, trapped in the flames. ‘I will never forget the stench of the charred bodies, when I drove through the rubble of Managua,’ Ms. Jagger has said. Fortunately her parents survived. She learned that aid from the U.S. and elsewhere was being misappropriated by the **Somoza** regime: these ruthless acts of pillage eventually fuelled the **Sandinista Revolution** and motivated her to fight repression, corruption and injustice. After her visit to Nicaragua, Bianca Jagger urged Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones to do a relief concert. In 1993 they performed in L.A. to raise funds for the victims of the earthquake, one of the first ever **relief concerts**.

In the spring of 1979 Bianca Jagger joined forces with the **British Red Cross** to raise funds for the victims of the conflict in Nicaragua; she then flew to her homeland to join the **International Red Cross** to help on the ground. 1979, the year of her divorce, coincided with the fall of the **Somoza** dictator.

In 1981 Bianca Jagger travelled to **Honduras** on a **US Congressional fact-finding mission**, visiting a UN refugee camp, 20 km from the border of El Salvador. During her visit to the camp an armed death squad crossed the border from El Salvador, with the Honduran army’s blessing, entered the camp and rounded up about forty refugees to take them back to El Salvador. Ms. Jagger, the delegation and the relief workers feared that the death squads were going to kill the hostages once they arrived in Salvadorian territory. Armed only with cameras, they followed the death squad and hostages for approximately half an hour. Finally, they came within earshot. The death squad turned, brandishing their M-16’s. Fearing for their lives, Ms Jagger and the relief workers began to shout, “You will have to kill us all,” and, “We will denounce your crime to the world.” There was a long pause. The death squad talked among themselves and, without explanation, left, leaving their hostages free - unharmed. This experience was a turning point for Ms. Jagger, marking the beginning of her human rights campaigning. She realised the importance of bearing witness when innocent people’s lives are at stake, how a small act of courage can make a difference, and sometimes save lives. Upon her return to the US, she testified before **The Congressional Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs**, to bring attention to the atrocities committed by the **Salvadorian** government.
and its paramilitary forces, with the complicity of the Honduran Government.

During the 1980’s and 90’s, Bianca Jagger campaigned against US-supported oppressive governments throughout Latin America, including in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, denounced the Contra war in Nicaragua, and worked closely with the Washington Office for Latin America.

Since the 1980s Ms Jagger has worked closely with human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Bosnia

In 1993 Bianca Jagger visited the former Yugoslavia, to document the mass rape of women in Bosnia. In July 1995, when the United Nations “safe area” of Srebrenica was overrun by Bosnian Serb troops, some 8,000 civilians, virtually the entire male population, were systematically massacred. Ms. Jagger wrote a decisive essay: ‘J’accuse: the Betrayal of Srebrenica,’ a detailed account of the massacre, which was published world-wide. Since then she has spoken on behalf of the survivors. For many years Ms Jagger campaigned to stop the genocide taking place in Bosnia and, later, to make the perpetrators accountable before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). She testified on this issue before the Helsinki Commission on Human Rights, the United States Congressional Human Rights Caucus, the International Operations Subcommittee on Human Rights, and the British and European Parliaments.

Between 1993 and 1996, Bianca Jagger evacuated 22 children out of Bosnia to receive medical care in the United States. She personally evacuated two gravely ill children, Sabina and Mohamed from Tusla, Bosnia. Tragically, Sabina did not survive the evacuation trip and died a couple of days after they arrived in Split, Croatia. Mohamed travelled with Ms. Jagger to the US and underwent successful heart surgery at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York. Mohamed lived with Ms. Jagger for a year, and then with his parents in New Jersey, before the family returned to Bosnia.

‘Iraq - an illegal, immoral and unwinnable war’

Bianca Jagger was in New York on September 11th, 2001. Three days after the terrorist attacks, she visited Ground Zero and paid tribute to the firemen, policemen and rescue teams who had worked 24/7 to find life amid the rubble. She decried the attacks as crimes against humanity. She urged President Bush to act in accordance to international law and cautioned against revenge rather than justice. She called for justice found not in the killing fields of Afghanistan, but before the international courts.

The Bar Human Rights Committee for England and Wales made Bianca Jagger their 2001 keynote lecturer at St Paul’s Cathedral, where she spoke on Justice vs. Revenge. She said:

In the end, if we want to eradicate terrorism, it will not be achieved by waging
wars on the oppressed, ravaged nations. It will not be achieved by drafting legislations that will deprive us of our civil liberties, and by giving up due process and judicial review. It will not be achieved by incarcerating potential future terrorists without appeal. It will certainly not be achieved, by erecting walls of barbed wire, separating us from those who - perhaps rightly - resent us.

In March 2002, Bianca Jagger travelled to Afghanistan with a delegation of fourteen women, organised by Global Exchange to support Afghan women’s projects. Ms. Jagger denounced the invasion of Iraq, as an ‘illegal, immoral and unwinnable war, which undermines the rule of international law.’ She visited Baghdad in the run-up to the war in early 2003 with a delegation of US academics.

Violence against Women and Girls

Bianca Jagger has campaigned for women’s rights for many years. She believes governments are failing to address the real ‘terror’ which millions of girls and women face every day. She has travelled around the world on fact finding missions, given speeches and written articles to address the ‘Missing MDG Target’ Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and the Culture of Impunity. She says, ‘It is not only our generation, but our daughters and granddaughters who will suffer if we do not stand up and call a halt to this global pandemic of violence against women and girls.’

The BJHRF is engaged on a global campaign to promote gender equality, eliminate violence against women and girls and end the culture of impunity, to promote women’s economic empowerment and their participation in the political arena.

Indigenous Rights

Bianca Jagger has long been a staunch defender of indigenous and tribal peoples’ rights throughout the world, including Latin America and India. Since founding the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation (BJHRF) in 2006 she has continued to advocate for their rights as Founder and Chair.

In 1991 her campaign proved instrumental in stopping a logging concession that would have endangered the Miskito Indians’ habitat on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. Ms. Jagger supported the Guarani in southern Brazil, in their campaign to protect their land from cattle ranchers, and engaged in a similar effort to protect the Yanomami of northern Brazil from invasions of their lands by gold miners. She has also supported the Cofán, Siona, Secoya, Kichwa and Huaorani in their battle against the oil company Texaco, now known as Chevron, in Ecuador. Bianca Jagger is campaigning in support of Chief Almir Narayamoga Surui, of the Surui Paiter in Brazil, to raise awareness of their struggle to defend their ancestral land in the Amazon from the encroachments of logging and mining companies.

Ms. Jagger is currently campaigning against the Brazilian government’s plan to build at least 34 dams in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon. These dams will displace tens of thousands of people, destroy lives and devastate the environment, inundating at least
6,470 sq. km of the world's largest tropical forest and threatening the survival of the Juruna, Arara and Xikrin indigenous peoples among many others. Some of the dams including the Belo Monte and Madeira megadams are underway - even now the river system that provides a fifth of the world's fresh water is being dammed, polluted and fouled up. Other megadams like the São Luiz do Tapajós, Jatobá and Chacorão dams are at the planning and survey stages.

Since 2009, the BJHRF has supported the Kondh tribe in Orissa, India, campaigning to protect their sacred Niyamgiri Mountain from the proposed bauxite mine by Vedanta Resources Plc, a British-based mining company. Bianca Jagger visited the Kondh in Orissa with ActionAid, appealed to government officials in India, spearheaded a letter campaign to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chief Minister of Orissa Naveen Patnaik. Ms Jagger wrote numerous articles for the national and international press regarding the plight of the Kondh. In cooperation with Amnesty and ActionAid she appealed to UK shareholders to withdraw their investments in Vedanta, attended and spoke at three Vedanta AGMs in London. On 24 August 2010, after 6 years of national and international campaigning, divestment by key Vedanta shareholders and protracted legal challenges, then Indian Minister of Environment and Forests, Jairam Ramesh refused permission for the mining project, criticising the company and accusing it of breaking the law. Vedanta appealed to the Indian Supreme Court to overturn this decision. However the appeal failed, and on 18 April 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that it is ‘up to the local gram sabha that governs the Niyamgiri Hills in Odisha to decide whether to allow mining by the Vedanta Group,’ handing the rights to their ancestral land back to the Kondh village council. This is a great victory for the Kondh people and for indigenous rights.

Reforming our Model of Development

As Chair of the BJHRF Bianca Jagger is advocating critical reforms to our model of development, which needs to encompass principles of justice, respect for human rights, democracy, good governance, accountability, protection of the environment and sustainability. She is calling for a shift in our fundamental values. Development should take into account the needs and aspirations of all sectors of society: local communities and indigenous people. The new model of development needs to move away from our obsession with profit and growth and, instead, focus on sustainability.

Death Penalty

Throughout her life Bianca Jagger has been a tireless opponent of the death penalty and has campaigned on behalf of numerous prisoners on death row. In 2003 she was made Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. In 1996 she was awarded the “Abolitionist of the Year Award” by the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty for “her tireless efforts and heroic dedication in achieving clemency for Guinevere Garcia”. Ms. Jagger received the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyer Champion of Justice Award in 2000. In June 2000, she travelled to Texas to meet with Gary Graham and plead on his behalf with Governor George W. Bush. Gary Graham was 17, a minor when he was sentenced to death. At his
request, she was one of the official witnesses at his execution, an experience which affected her profoundly.

Bianca Jagger continues to denounce the lack of meaningful appellate review in commutation proceedings. In her role as Founder and Chair of the BJHRF, she campaigns on behalf of prisoners on death row in the US, Iraq, Iran and elsewhere. Ms. Jagger is supporting Reggie Clemons who is appealing for clemency in the state of Missouri. On August 6th 2013 Judge Michael Manners, the Special Master reviewing his case submitted his findings to the Missouri Supreme Court. Judge Manners found that prosecutors suppressed evidence, and that the statement Reggie Clemons gave to police was coerced.

Bianca Jagger is currently supporting the case of Linda Carty, a British grandmother on death row in Texas. Her appeal failed in April 2012 and Linda Carty is currently awaiting an execution date. Ms. Jagger is supporting the cases of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, a mother of two who was sentenced to death in Iran and Tariq Aziz, Iraq’s former Deputy Prime Minister, sentenced to death by an Iraqi tribunal, currently languishing in prison, awaiting execution. Ms Jagger has said, ‘It is hoped that Iraq will establish itself as a democracy, and capital punishment has no place in democratic society. It is abhorrent that it was under the US occupation that the death penalty was reinstated in Iraq.’

Bianca Jagger is calling for clemency in the case of Bernardo Tercero, a Nicaraguan who has been on death row in Texas for 14 years. He was a minor at the time of the crime.

Ms. Jagger and the BJHRF led the "Too Much Doubt" Twitter campaign with Amnesty International on behalf of Troy Davis, an innocent man who was executed by the State of Georgia, USA, on September 21st, 2011.

On 24 February 2010, Ms Jagger delivered a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the 4th Annual Congress against the Death Penalty at the UN in Geneva. She said in her address,

> I have witnessed the State machinery of death at work, selectively killing people because they are poor, a minority and cannot afford adequate legal counsel. The death penalty is unfair, arbitrary and capricious often based on jurisprudence fraught with racial discrimination and judicial bias... These state sanctioned murders have no place in 21st century society.

**Crimes against Present and Future Generations**

Under the auspices of the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, Ms Jagger has been working to develop a legal framework to hold CEOs and management of companies accountable for human rights abuses and environmental destruction. She advocates the development of a definition of Crimes against Present and Future Generations, and for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to extend its jurisdiction to cover Crimes against Present and Future Generations that are not already proscribed by the ICC’s Rome Statute as Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, or Crimes of Genocide. “Crimes against future generations of life” are acts or conduct committed with the knowledge of
their severe consequences on the health, safety, or means of survival of present and future generations of humans, and their threat to the survival of entire species or ecosystems.

Upcoming:

On October 9th 2013, Bianca Jagger will address the International Bar Association Climate Change Justice and Human Rights showcase session in Boston on Crimes against Present and Future Generations.

On October 10th, 2013 Bianca Jagger will deliver a talk at the Harvard Mahindra Centre for the Humanities, Boston, on 'Ending the Global Pandemic of Violence against Women and Girls- Achieving the Missing MDG Target.'

On November 21st 2013, Bianca Jagger will deliver the annual Longford Lecture in London, on 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls and the Culture of Impunity: Achieving the Missing Millennium Development Goal Target.'

Media and Social Media

Ms. Jagger has participated in numerous television and radio debates and lectures throughout the world about Central America, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan, genocide, war crimes, the war on terror and the ensuing erosion of civil liberties and human rights, Crimes against Present and Future Generations, climate change, the rainforest, the protection of indigenous peoples, corporate social responsibility, children and women’s rights, human trafficking, and the death penalty. She has participated on the BBC’s Question Time, Newsnight, Channel 4 News, Panorama and CNN. She has written articles for the opinion pages of the Observer (UK), The Guardian (UK), The Independent (UK), The Mail on Sunday (UK), The Sunday Express (UK) The New Statesman (UK), the European (UK) The New York Times (USA), the Washington Post (USA), The Dallas Morning News (USA), the Columbus Dispatcher (USA), The Huffington Post (USA) Liberation (FR), Le Journal du Dimanche (FR), Le Juriste International (FR), Panorama (IT), Der Spiegel (DE), and Suddeutsche (DE) among others.

Bianca Jagger has a blog in the Huffington Post.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bianca-jagger

She is a great believer in the power of social media, and tweets regularly.

Twitter @BiancaJagger

Facebook: 'Like' The Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation:

Google +: Bianca Jagger https://plus.google.com/103155853214349288608/posts