

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS GUIDE

August 2015

USA

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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Introduction



This guide is for individuals and groups who want to deepen their commitment to the human rights movement through Amnesty International. Whether you are a student or local activist, a volunteer leader, or an Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) member interested in getting active, this is your guide.

AIUSA staff and members collaborated to bring together tried-and-true activist practices and organizational knowledge to mobilize, inspire, and empower you. You will find resources on how to run effective group meetings, how to lobby, planning materials, communications, and guides for starting a local or student group.

For more online resources, follow the link:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/lead-in-your-community>

About Amnesty International USA

Mission

Our vision is of a world in which every person **enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) and other internationally recognized human rights standards. The UDHR states that the “the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights” of all people is “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

We are funded by members and people like you. We are independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion. No government is beyond scrutiny. **No situation is beyond hope.**

How We Work

Amnesty International unites people from all over the world to fight for human rights using our signature tactics.

Research

Amnesty International keeps vigilant watch on the rights of people around the world and publishes hundreds of independent reports based on our rigorous research, free of corporate and government influence.

Action

Through our dynamic campaigns and long-term casework, Amnesty International members propel key human rights concerns and stories of individuals at risk into the glare of the international media and demand the attention of government officials, corporations, international institutions and policy makers.

Advocacy

We combine high-level legislative work, media outreach and grassroots mobilization to shape and promote legislation and policies to advance human rights, protect individuals and free prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

The elected Board of Directors cultivates a clear vision for the organization through policies that set goals and priorities for AIUSA. They provide stewardship for the organizations; establish appropriate and meaningful working relationships with staff; and ensure the financial health of the organization through fiscal oversight and support of fundraising strategies. For information on our current Board of Directors and their specific role within the organization, please visit the “Governance” tab on the Activist Resource Community (ARC).

Board Elections, Candidates and Processes

The Board of Directors holds elections every year. Each year, the Nominating Committee seeks candidates who, during a three-year term, are willing and able to dedicate considerable time and energy to AIUSA governance. To learn more about the election process, interact with current candidates running for the Board (seasonal), and get information on how to apply to become an AIUSA Board Member, visit the Board Elections, Candidates and Process page on the Activist Resource Community.

Resolutions

Any individual member or group of members has an opportunity to impact the mission, methods, policy, organization, or allocation of resources. Resolutions are a means by which members can influence policy on a regional, national, or international level. The purpose of resolutions is to direct a change in policy, in the method for instituting policy, or in Amnesty International’s organizational structure. At AIUSA Regional Conferences, resolutions may be voted on by individual voting members who have paid dues to AIUSA and by one designated delegate from each AIUSA student or local group.

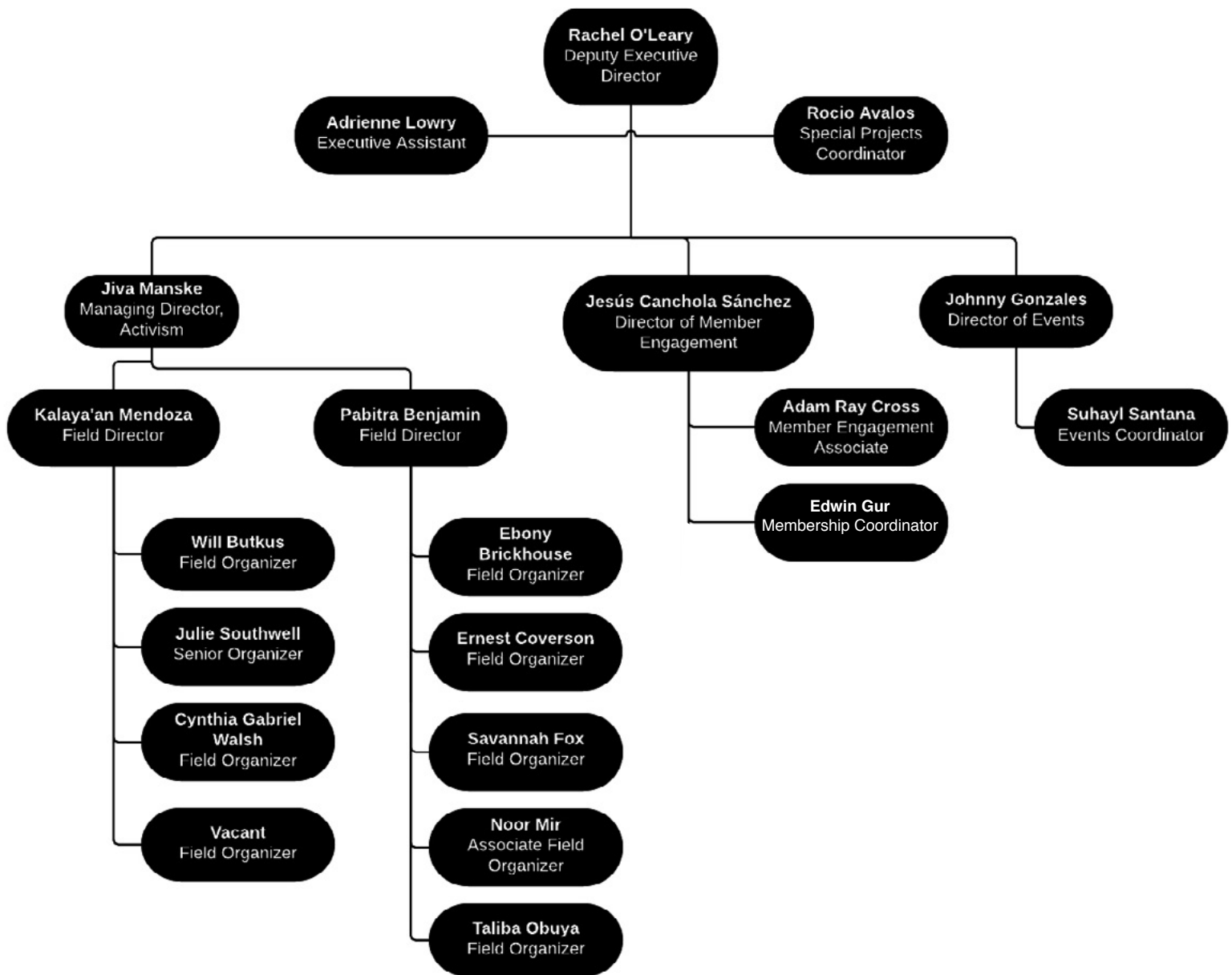
National Resolutions Committee

NRC members promote and facilitate the Membership Resolutions Process, assist sponsors in drafting resolutions, prepare background for the regional and AGM resolutions packets, and advise the Board regarding the process. Involvement is year-round, with the heaviest workload September-November (from submission deadlines through Regional Conference follow-up).

MEMBERSHIP

When you become a member of Amnesty International, you are joining over 7 million people around the world in a powerful movement that is fighting to free prisoners of conscience, stop torture, abolish the death penalty and ensure the human rights of all people.

Membership Mobilization Department



Priority Campaigns

We have created this guide to provide brief descriptions of the Police Accountability and My Body, My Rights campaigns, as well as priority and ongoing work with the Security With Human Rights program, and casework with the Individuals at Risk program.

STEP 1: Read through the guide. This guide provides basic information about what you can sign up for, key time frames for important actions and resources you can receive when you sign up.

STEP 2: Decide what to work on. Your group should discuss which areas of AIUSA's human rights work you would like to focus on for the coming year. Consider working on at least one of AIUSA's organizational priorities, which include the Police Accountability and My Body, My Rights campaigns, as well as priority work with the Individuals at Risk and Security With Human Rights programs.

- Local/Student Group Leaders: it is important to discuss priority campaigns at the beginning of the year/semester (for more information, see "Planning and Goal Setting" in Section 3 of the Activist Toolkit).
- Keep in mind that you can sign up for multiple issues.

We recommend that new or smaller groups should start with just one campaign focus and then gradually take on more work as the group grows and gains more experience.

STEP 3: Sign-Up. In order to sign up, please email connect@aiusa.org with your 1.) name, 2.) the campaign you want to work on, 3.) your Member Leader position-if you have one, and 4.) in which state you are based.

STEP 4: Take Action. There are many ways to take action on a priority campaign. If you are in need of materials or have questions about campaign materials, petitions or upcoming actions in your area, feel free to connect with your Student Activist Coordinator (SAC), Area Coordinator (AC), or Field Organizer (FO).

Questions?

Contact your Field Organizer. They can put you in touch with your Student Activist Coordinator (student groups) or your Area Coordinator (local groups) and also help with any questions you might have. See the Staff Contact section in the Appendices.

Police Accountability Campaign

On June 18, 2015, Amnesty International USA released a report entitled *Deadly Force*, a 50 state analysis of state laws — where they exist — governing the use of lethal force by law enforcement officials. Shockingly, all 50 states plus Washington, DC, fail to meet international standards. Building on decades of research and advocacy, and reinvigorated by the power of youth leaders in Ferguson and elsewhere who have ignited a movement, this report has become the foundation for a campaign to reform laws on the use of lethal force in the US.

Amnesty International Activists—

Please join the Police Accountability Campaign!

- Say "No!" to the use of unnecessary or excessive force by police in the United States.
- Say "Yes!" to a state by state review and revision of use of lethal force statutes to bring them in line with international standards.
- Say "No!" to discriminatory police practices.
- Say "Yes!" to the Police Accountability Campaign!



Lethal Force

There is a widespread and persistent problem of unnecessary or excessive force by police in the United States. Estimates say that 400 to over 1,000 people are killed by law enforcement officers every year. The recent deaths of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Ezell Ford and many others have set off a long-overdue conversation on race, policing and justice as well as protests around the country. In particular, Amnesty International is concerned that none of the fifty states and Washington D.C. comply with international standards on the use of lethal force by law enforcement officers. We are calling on all states to review and revise their use of lethal force statutes to bring them in line with those standards. The President and Department of Justice (DOJ) should support the creation of a national commission (National Crime and Justice Task Force) to examine and produce recommendations on policing issues, including a nationwide review of police use of lethal force laws, policies, training and practices, which is urgently needed, as well as a thorough review and reform of oversight and accountability mechanisms. These laws, policies and practices must be brought in line with international standards

How to Get Involved:

- Read the *Deadly Force* report: www.amnestyusa.org/lethalforce
- Check out our activist resources: www.amnestyusa.org/DeadlyForceActivistResources
- Organize an event to raise awareness or join an action near you. We currently have targeted campaigns around police accountability in Missouri, Maryland, New York, California, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. Contact your SAC, AC, or Field Organizer for more information.
- Urge President Obama and legislators across the country to support the creation of a National Crime and Justice Task Force to examine and produce recommendations on policing issues, including the use of lethal force: www.amnestyusa.org/

MY BODY, MY RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Being able to make our own decisions about our health, body, sexuality and reproductive life is a basic human right. My Body, My Rights is Amnesty International's global campaign to help ensure access to sexual and reproductive rights for all.

Amnesty International Activists—

Please join the My Body, My Rights Campaign!

- Say “Yes!” to ensuring that everyone has access to their sexual and reproductive rights.
- Say “No!” to the criminalization of sexuality and reproduction by governments.
- Say “Yes!” to freedom from discrimination, coercion, and violence.
- Say “Yes!” to joining the My Body, My Rights Campaign!

It's Your Body! Know Your Rights!

Women and girls and people from groups at risk of discrimination on other grounds, including sexuality and ethnicity, are disproportionately affected by restrictions on their sexual and reproductive rights. Human rights law states that everyone has the right to have access to quality, comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health services, counseling and comprehensive sexual education. Barriers to these services and the information needed for a healthy life must be removed. Amnesty International has worked on promoting tangible outcomes for reproductive rights in Nepal, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Ireland. This year Amnesty International's “My Body, My Rights” campaign is focused on Ireland. Ireland has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the world. In fact, abortion is a crime that is punishable by up to 14 years in prison, annually forcing about 4,000 women and girls to leave Ireland to access abortion in other countries.

How to Get Involved

- Take action on our website and tell the Irish government women are not criminals: it's time to change Ireland's restrictive abortion laws--then spread the word and raise awareness about the abortion ban in Ireland.
- Sign up for the Women's Human Rights Action Network for more campaign information. Visit the public areas of the website to get campaign updates and review reports.
- Visit the members' section of AIUSA's website to get campaign materials and graphics.

Security with Human Rights

More than a decade after the attacks of September 11, 2001, an ever-expanding national security state is violating the rights to freedom of expression and privacy of millions of people in the United States and all over the world. Amnesty International's Security With Human Rights program works to end systematic human rights abuses committed in the name of national security, from mass surveillance to unlawful drone strikes to indefinite detention at Guantanamo. Our priority campaign, "American Torture Story," seeks to ensure the U.S. never returns to torture in the name of national security.

Investigate this American Torture Story

From 2002 to 2008, the CIA "disappeared" more than 100 men and tortured many. No one has ever been brought to justice for these crimes. Because of this impunity, we are at risk of seeing a return to torture under the next president. We must send a message to would-be abusers: torture is a crime and no one should get away with it.

A Senate committee spent years reviewing millions of government documents to piece together a landmark report known as the "Senate torture report," which was released in December 2014. It contains disturbing details of abuses, including forced rectal feeding and other sexual abuse, near-drownings and forced immersion in ice water, and men hung from beams nude in diapers. Shockingly, the Justice Department is keeping the report locked away in a sealed envelope.

Torture can never be justified. Under international law, it is clear: torture is never legal. Even in a time of war or threat of war, even in a state of emergency that threatens the life of the nation, even when ordered by a superior officer or government authority, there can be no exemption from this prohibition.

What has Amnesty done so far?

Amnesty International activists have sent more than 50,000 emails, letters and tweets to the Justice Department urging it to reopen and expand investigations into CIA torture. In addition, Amnesty, along with other human rights organizations, delivered petitions with 111,788 signatures demanding that the Department of Justice ensures accountability for the use of torture by the CIA.

How to Get Involved

- Learn more: www.amnestyusa.org/american torture story
- Take action by demanding accountability at www.amnestyusa.org/cia torture
- Plan/find an event (contact SAC/AC/FO) in your area to raise awareness and take action using our American Torture Story toolkit: www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/AmericanTortureStory_Toolkit.pdf



Individuals at Risk

Take Action, Change a Life.

A program whose mission is to free Prisoners of Conscience, stand with human rights defenders, and campaign alongside individuals and communities at risk of human rights abuses around the world

Amnesty International works to change laws and policies that lead to systemic human rights violations, but we also campaign for and with individual people to resolve their cases--and that's the role of the Individuals at Risk Program. By campaigning with us, you share in the joy of knowing that your action literally helps save lives.

Together, we free Prisoners of Conscience--those jailed for the peaceful expression of their beliefs or identity. And we stop torture, halt executions, protect human rights defenders from threats, and ensure justice for survivors of abuse. In short, we help create a better world, person by person.

"You were my voice when I had none"

Birtukan Mideksa was a leader of a political opposition party in Ethiopia when she was arrested for her work. She was declared a Prisoner of Conscience and Amnesty members and groups helped free her. She told us, *"Thank you for your hard work and your campaigns to secure my release from prison... Your letters, phone calls, and petitions were my protection during the months I spent in solitary confinement. You were my voice when I had none."*

"I owe my freedom to Amnesty International"

José Gallardo was a general in the Mexican army when he was arrested for calling for human rights reforms. Amnesty International declared him a Prisoner of Conscience and our members and groups helped free him. He said, *"Sometimes they would hit me... I asked myself if there was someone outside fighting for my case, my family... The prison doors opened, then my daughter approached me. I owe my freedom to Amnesty International."*

The inspiration and hope we feel from knowing our actions can truly make a difference motivates us to campaign even harder for other people still being subjected to human rights abuses here in the US and around the world. There's no time like the present to get involved!

Make a Case Commitment with Your Amnesty Local Group or Student Group

A Case Commitment is one of the most powerful ways that you and your Amnesty local group or student group can make a difference as Amnesty activists: it is a promise by your group to undertake an ongoing campaign to free a Prisoner of Conscience or resolve another individual case of your choice, no matter how long it takes, whether months or years.

Along the way, your group will form a bond with your cases as well as each other. And when you win, the feeling is indescribable. Many groups have met the people they worked to free and the experience can inspire you for a lifetime. You will be supported in your group's Case Commitment by Amnesty volunteers and staff, including through training in effective campaigning skills.

Here are the next steps to make a Case Commitment:

A) Email or call Emily Walsh, Associate Campaigner with the Individuals at Risk Program, at ewalsh@aiusa.org or 212.633.4256 to request the list of cases that are available.

B) Meet with your group to select a case, then let Emily know. She'll work with the relevant AIUSA Country Specialist to prepare a Case Dossier for your group.

C) Emily will then set up a phone call with your group and the Country Specialist to discuss the case, prepare a strategy for your group's campaigning, make sure you have the training and materials you need to be successful, and connect you with other Amnesty groups and members to share ideas and strategies.

D) Your group should regularly let Emily know the actions taken on the case, so that we can keep a tally and track progress.

E) Please note that Student Groups should include their faculty advisor in this process, so that s/he can provide continuity on the Case Commitment once the members of your group graduate.

Please note that AIUSA members passed a resolution at the Annual General Meeting in 2010 that “establishes a goal of having at least one group work on each case in the Amnesty Individuals at Risk Portfolio that is suitable for group work as determined by the IAR Program and Country Specialists.” Hence, to help Amnesty reach this goal, we ask all groups to make a Case Commitment on at least one case.

Campaign on Focus Cases

At any given time, the Individuals at Risk team, led by Senior Campaigner Jasmine Heiss, campaigns intensively on between one and three Focus Cases drawn from the Urgent Action Network, Case Commitment Initiative, or Write for Rights. Focus Cases get an extra surge of campaigning to help push them across the finish line. One recent example is our successful campaign with Darrell Cannon, Anthony Holmes, and other survivors of torture by Chicago police to pass a law ensuring reparations, including compensation, rehabilitation, education, a memorial and an apology.

Right now, we have two Focus Cases that can really benefit from your activism.

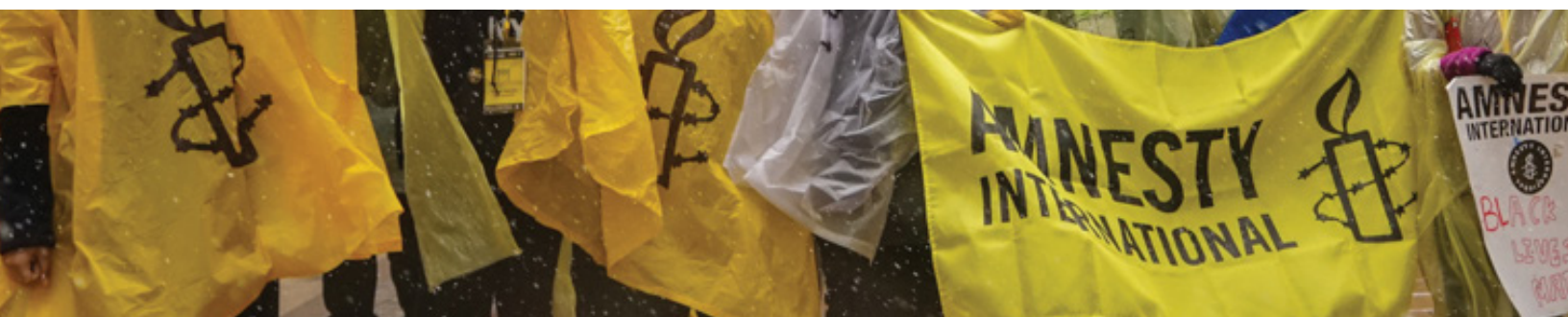
Albert Woodfox (USA): Albert has been subjected to prolonged solitary confinement in Louisiana for over 43 years—despite his conviction being overturned repeatedly. Just this year, a federal judge ordered him released. But the Attorney General of Louisiana, Buddy Caldwell, wants to prosecute Albert yet again. It's well past time to set Albert free and reform the use of prolonged solitary confinement in US prisons, which can amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment in violation of international law. This human rights crisis affects around 80,000 prisoners each day in the United States.

Raif Badawi (Saudi Arabia): Raif is a Prisoner of Conscience and writer sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes for expressing his opinion about religious leaders in Saudi Arabia on his blog. He has already suffered the first 50 lashes, and could face the next 50 on any Friday. Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court recently upheld his outrageous sentence and we are campaigning relentlessly to reunite Raif with his wife Ensaf and their three children, who have been granted asylum in Canada.

Here are the next steps to take action for Albert and Raif:

A) Contact Jasmine Heiss, Individuals at Risk Senior Campaigner, at jheiss@aiusa.org or 202.529.8146 for a set of actions on each case that will be strategic for you or your group to take, based on where you live.

B) To sign and share our online petitions on each case and make a phone call on behalf of Raif right now, please visit www.amnestyusa.org/angola3 and www.amnestyusa.org/raif.



Participate in the 2015 Write for Rights

Write for Rights is our Amnesty movement's largest annual event. People like you all over the world come together on or around International Human Rights Day on December 10th to write letters and take email actions on a specific set of cases (usually 10), so that we can magnify our efforts and help save lives. One of the great things about Write for Rights is that you can organize a fun letter writing party with your friends, family, and colleagues.

And it works. Moses Akatugba is just one example. In 2005, while a teenager in Nigeria, he was tortured into confessing that he stole three cell phones. On the basis of that confession, he was sentenced to death. In 2014, he was one of the Write for Rights cases. In May of 2015, he walked free. He told us, "Amnesty International members and activists are my heroes...I promise to be a human rights activist - to fight for others." Take part in Write for Rights 2015 and help save more lives.

Here are the next steps to take part in Write for Rights 2015:

A) Go to www.amnestyusa.org/writeforrights to sign up to host a letter writing party, join a party, or write as an individual.

The cases should be ready in October and you can write any time between then and the end of December.

B) Spread the word and ask your friends, families and social networks to join as well.

C) Contact Zeke Johnson, Senior Director of the Individuals at Risk Program if you have questions: zjohnson@aiusa.org or 212.633.4256.



Join the Urgent Action Network as an Individual or as a Group

The Urgent Action Network (UAN) is about taking actions—like writing letters, sending emails and faxes, or making phone calls—as quickly as possible on emergency cases of people facing life-threatening abuses.

We send out the alerts with pertinent information, you take the actions of your choice, and together we help save lives. We regularly hear good news from the UAN about Prisoners of Conscience released, executions halted, and torture stopped. It is inspiring to read about the lives you help, and being a part of the UAN is truly easy to do. You can write as an individual or along with your group.

Here are the next steps to join the Urgent Action Network:

A) Go to www.amnestyusa.org/uan, scroll down to the “Get Involved” section in the center of the page, and then click the link titled “Join Amnesty International’s Urgent Action Network.” If you need help or have questions, contact Brittney Bartlett, Assistant Campaigner with the Individuals at Risk Program at bbartlett@aiusa.org or 212.633.4179

B) You can choose either to receive all Urgent Actions, or narrow by region of the world, human rights issue, or frequency.

C) Check your email for Urgent Actions, and write letters, send emails and faxes, or make calls

D) Let us know the actions you’ve taken. This is super important so that we can keep a tally and track our impact. Each Urgent Action includes information on how to easily report by email or online.

Death Penalty Abolition Campaign

Amnesty International unconditionally opposes the death penalty as the ultimate denial of human rights and a cruel, inhuman and degrading form of punishment. The application of the death penalty is arbitrary and unfair, and it is applied in a discriminatory manner against the poor and against racial and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the chance of executing a wrongly convicted person is too high. Since 1973 in the United States, more than 125 people have been released from death row after having been found innocent.

Amnesty International campaigns to abolish the death penalty in the USA by focusing on individual cases, supporting death penalty repeal efforts in the states, and educating campuses and communities about the fatally flawed nature of the capital punishment system.

Amnesty is Calling for:

- Countries who still use the death penalty must immediately halt all executions.
- Countries who have already stopped executing people, need to take this punishment off their legal books for all crimes, permanently.
- All death sentences should be commuted to prison sentences.

How to get Involved?

- Reach out to your field organizer or check out the Activist Resource Center to get connected to local activism with your State Death Penalty Area Coordinator (SDPAC).
- Learn more and find organizing resources at www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty
- Stay up to date on our priority cases by following our blog at <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/category/deathpenalty/>
- Read Amnesty’s annual review of the death penalty worldwide <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/0001/2015/en/>

Lobbying

Sign up for our Spring and Fall Lobby Weeks at: aiusa.org/lobbyweek

Other Legislative Actions:

- **Tweet a photo or video message to your Representative** of you holding up signs or speaking out in support of human rights legislation, like the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) and International Violence against Women Act (IVAWA), with the hashtags #ERPA #IVAWA and #AmnestyLobby. We're asking our members to do this outside or inside the representative's office, so that they know that you were there!
- **Spend an afternoon petitioning on your campus**, at a local park, downtown area or other public space in support of human rights legislation. Collect as many signatures as you can and then plan a petition drop-off day at your Representative's office. Tweet with the hashtags above!
- **Invite a Representative** or one of his/her staffers to come to your school to discuss human rights legislation. If you choose to do this, pair up with one of the academic departments or groups on campus committed to principles of impartiality. Send pictures/videos of the event to grassroots@aiusa.org
- **Organize a rally** in your community or on your campus in support of ERPA, IVAWA or another piece of legislation Amnesty supports. Hold up signs, take pictures and send those pictures to your Representative's office (and to grassroots@aiusa.org).
- **Letters: Letters are effective.** Short handwritten letters are more powerful than petitions or e-mail. Be specific about what action you want.
- **Phone Call your Members of Congress:** If you can't visit Washington, you can call the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121. Ask to be connected to your Senator or Representative, then ask to speak to the staff member who handles human rights.
- **Visit a Town Hall Meetings:** Officials often host town hall meetings open to the public where you can ask questions about specific issues. Call your Member's District Office to see if any are scheduled.

Preparing for a meeting with a Congressional office:

1. **Select an issue** by contacting your AIUSA Legislative Coordinator.
2. **Schedule the meeting(s):** Contact the officials' district offices or Washington, D.C. offices, send background material, and work with staff members and schedulers to set meeting times and locations. Be persistent!
3. **Know the issue:** Do background research using the resources provided by the Legislative Coordinator and know your asks. The key to influencing the people who represent you is proving to them that you are a committed, well-informed, and persistent constituent!
4. **Prepare meeting agenda(s) and leave behind materials:** Send background materials to the person with whom you will be meeting.
5. **Practice the meeting(s):** Meet with your delegation to decide who will say what, practice what each person will say, and brainstorm answers to possible questions from the official or staff member. Practice the dialogue a couple of times so you sound natural to the staff person, and not like you are reading from a script. Practicing will build your confidence and add to your effectiveness.

Meeting with your Congressional office:

- **Thank your Representative or the staffer:** Express your appreciation for their taking the time to meet with you.
- **Introduce Amnesty International** — Briefly discuss the kind of work Amnesty does, the number of groups in the state, members in the U.S., etc.
- **Be specific:** For example, state that you would like your Representative to co-sponsor the legislation you will be discussing during the meeting.
- **Be concise:** For example, provide a concise summary of the legislation - what will the bill do?
- **Make your meeting a conversation.** Ask questions such as “What human rights legislation has my Representative co-sponsored in the past?”

If the office asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, let them know that you will email/call them with the answer shortly.

- **Schedule your next conversation.** Make sure you let the office know that you would like to follow-up after the meeting in x days or weeks.
- **Fill out a short debrief form at:** aiusa.org/debrief

Follow-up after a meeting with a Congressional office :

1. **Send a thank you:** After your meeting make sure you call or email the office and thank them for taking the time to meet with you, ask if they have any additional questions and remind them that you will be following up in x days or weeks.
2. **Send responses to questions raised during the meeting:** Contact your AIUSA Legislative Coordinator for help answering questions.
3. **Publicly thank the official:** If the elected official takes the requested action, thank him or her publicly, with a letter to the editor or via social media.
4. **Do follow-up actions:** Letter writing, phone calls, letters to the editor, community education sessions, vigils or social media help thank the official or urge him or her to take action.
5. **Contact the office next time the issue comes up:** Provide new information and Amnesty's stance.
6. **Continue to build a relationship with an elected official or staff person:** Get the name of the staff person you speak to and try to deal with the same person each time. Remember that if your representatives are helpful and you praise them publicly, next time they may help even more. The ultimate goal is to build a positive long-term relationship.

Resources

- **Your AIUSA Legislative Coordinator:** grassroots@aiusa.org
- **AIUSA's Raise the Roof video:** <http://www.amnestyusa.org/learntolobby>
- **Information on legislation:** <http://thomas.gov>
- **Contact Information and Bios for Legislators**
<http://house.gov>
<http://senate.gov>

Country and Thematic Specialists

When Amnesty USA takes action, it calls upon the expertise and dedication of its extensive body of volunteer experts to help develop and deliver efforts that have an impact.

What can Country and Thematic Specialists do for you?

- Provide background information on a country or theme
- Help strategize with you to develop specific actions on a case or issue
- Help you locate audio-visual or other materials for your meetings and activities
- Link your group with others working on the same issue
- Speak at your event or suggest someone who can
- Advise you on how to plan vigils or other actions
- Suggest diaspora or other groups in area for collaboration

WORLD REGIONS

AFRICA

Central_Africa_Contact@aiusa.org

East_Africa_Contact@aiusa.org

Southern_Africa_Contact@aiusa.org

West_Africa_Contact@aiusa.org

AMERICAS

Andes_Contact@aiusa.org

Caribbean_Canada_Contact@aiusa.org

Central_America_Mexico_Contact@aiusa.org

Southern_Cone_Contact@aiusa.org (includes Brazil)

ASIA

China_Contact@aiusa.org

Northeast_Asia_Contact@aiusa.org (Koreas)

South_Asia_Contact@aiusa.org

Southeast_Asia_Contact@aiusa.org

EUROPE/CENTRAL ASIA

Eurasia_Contact@aiusa.org

Europe_Contact@aiusa.org

Turkey_Contact@aiusa.org

MENA

Middle_East_Contact@aiusa.org

North_Africa_Contact@aiusa.org

THEMATIC ISSUES

Business and Human Rights: corpaction@aiusa.org

LGBT Human Rights: LGBT_Contact@aiusa.org

Military/Security/Police Issues: MSP@aiusa.org

Women's Human Rights: WHR@aiusa.org photo

Get Started

By committing to being an Amnesty activist, you'll gain valuable skills and tangible leadership experience, build community with people who are as passionate about human rights as you are, and become a part of a growing movement of people who are changing the world.

As a member of Amnesty International you are part of a community of people who make a difference, and who care about dignity, solidarity, and justice. You are part of a movement that gives hope to the human rights defenders that inspire us, and together we change the world.

If you are a community member or student, you can register your group to receive materials, campaign information, and one-on-one support from Field Organizers and other member leaders so that you have what you need to make effective change in your community, on campus, and with others on global level.

HOW TO: Build Your Group at Every Event

This HOW TO Guide is designed to help you and your group effectively run an event. While events are often seen as opportunities to simply raise awareness about the important issues we work on, it is important to remember that these events can also help you engage new members. Your group's activities will show others that, with collective effort, winning human rights victories is possible. By asking and encouraging new people to join Amnesty, volunteer in a local or student group, become a member of a network, or attend another event, you are building our movement and increasing Amnesty's ability to fight human rights abuses around the world.

Tips to remember:

Sign people in

At every event, actively ask everyone who attends to sign in with their name, telephone number, and email address. You can post someone at the door of a speaking event, assign people to circulate in the crowd with clipboards at street theater performances or vigils, or have sign-in sheets at letter-writing events and group meetings. People who have already taken some type of action with Amnesty — whether it be attending a film or writing a letter — are more likely to participate again.

Stay connected

Contact each new person individually, preferably by phone, within two weeks of the event. Use this time to find out their interests and ask them to get involved. You might feel like you are being aggressive, but you will be letting them know right away that you think their participation is important and welcome. See the Run Your Group section of the Activist Toolkit for more information on recruiting and retaining members.

HOW TO: Write a Letter

Amnesty International began in 1961 when one man wrote an article and launched a letter-writing campaign that sparked an international movement. Today, letter writing remains one of the most powerful tactics we can use to change lives.

Remember, your single letter will be combined with those from Amnesty members and supporters around the world. When governments receive a flood of letters they know that people around the world care about an issue or a person, and they change policies, release Prisoners of Conscience, and take other actions to safeguard human rights.

Tips to remember:

- Letters do not need to be long or beautifully composed. All they must do is express your concern and make a simple request.

- Identify yourself by age and nationality to emphasize the fact that all kinds of individuals everywhere are concerned about human rights in the country.
- If you have studied in the country or have done business there, mention it (as long as you have considered potential negative consequences).
- In its action recommendations, Amnesty always indicates for what and to whom appeals should be made. Follow these directions and use the designated titles of officials.
- Don't ask for release if the appeal says Amnesty's recommendation is specifically fair trial or commutation of a death sentence.
- Be consistent with the facts, analysis and recommendations provided in Amnesty's materials on the case.

HOW TO: Table Effectively

Tabling is an effective way to make Amnesty International USA more visible in your community. Your group can publicize its current work, announce upcoming events, recruit new members, and raise funds by tabling. Tabling can also provide members of the public an opportunity to take action. Possible venues include community festivals, art shows, special events, festivals, and local coffeehouses and bookstores.

Table Set-Up Is Important!

- The appearance of the table (and the body language of Amnesty volunteers) should invite passers-by to stop and check it out.
- Make sure people can see that it is an Amnesty table by including a banner, signs, and other materials.
- It is important to create a "self-help" space where people can walk up and easily find a general Amnesty brochure and a clear example of Amnesty's work (a petition or postcard with background information)
- Use music or video to draw attention to your table.

Engage People!

- Make sure you and your group members have the information necessary to answer general questions about Amnesty's work.
- Because some people feel intimidated to walk up and ask questions, make sure you acknowledge each person, welcome them to your table and try to engage them in conversation.
- Initiate conversations with table visitors. Ask: "Are you familiar with the work of Amnesty International?" "Have you heard of our Police Accountability Campaign?" "Are you interested in a particular country or issue?" While it is important to greet each person, respect those who may not want to have a conversation, but just want to browse.

SUPPLY CHECKLIST:

- **Table Reserve**—reserve a table with the venue or secure your own well in advance.
- **Banners**—Should be clearly visible from a distance.
- **General Information**—Have information about Amnesty International USA available to the public.
- **Flyers**—Have information available about upcoming events your group is hosting.
- **Sign-Up Sheet**—Get people's contact information and follow up with them for future events.
- **Action Opportunities**—Supply background information on opportunities for immediate action.
- **Donation Jar**—Collect contributions, if permitted.

HOW TO: Hold a Vigil

One way to raise community members' interest in the issues on which your group is working is to hold a silent candlelight vigil. Invite students, community members, and ally organizations to call to mind the plight of the person or group of people your group is remembering. A vigil can also draw attention to another event that you have planned, such as a guest speaker or a video showing.

Some things to remember:

- Get permission from the local authorities or school administration. A permit to demonstrate is often required.
- Establish a pattern—a line or a circle—where the vigil can easily be seen.
- Try to maintain silence.
- Designate two spokespeople to stand separately from the vigil line to distribute leaflets and talk to passersby who want to know what your group is doing.
- Concentrate on the quality of the vigil; numbers are important, but are not decisive.

HOW TO: Use Chalking

Chalking sidewalks is a great way to publicize your group's events or to raise awareness about an issue. You can use the messages and images that are part of a campaign or urgent action, such as "My Body, My Rights!" Chalking should be done in strategic areas where people are likely to take note of writing on the sidewalk.

Some things to remember:

- Keep the message short and simple.
- Use colors that catch people's attention.
- If you are a student group, check with your school administration to make sure chalking sidewalks does not violate any school rules.
- To get the job done quickly without disrupting people, plan on chalking when there is little sidewalk traffic.
- Coordinate chalking with an event or series of events you have planned and add that information to the chalked message.

HOW TO: Host a Teach-in

The measure of successful education is that it leads to action. A teach-in educates people in order to take action. It is a chance to inform people about an issue and provide them with opportunities to take action. Be sure to balance education, sharing, and action at your event and allow enough time for people to discuss the issues. Teach-ins provide an excellent opportunity to work with another organization to educate the broader community.

Tips to remember:

- Hold your teach-in at a school, college, or community center that provides an educational yet informal setting. Be sure that the location is accessible to the community with which you are working. • A member of your group should open the session with an informative talk, introducing your group, the type of activities that you have been working on, and background information on Amnesty's work on the issue.
- Design one or more small group activities to allow participants to have more in-depth discussions about the topic, do a small group exercise or discuss how they can get involved or plan a next activity.
- Be sure to relate the specific topic of the teach-in to the larger picture of human rights.
- Use a related video, art, and relevant literature as learning tools.
- Leave time to engage the audience in a discussion about the issues presented and steps for action.
- Close the teach-in with a letter-writing activity or some other type of action.
- Have a sign-up sheet available for those interested in getting involved with your Amnesty group.

HOW TO: Host a Speaker

Hosting a speaker can inject excitement into your regular group routine, give members a closer, more personal look at human rights issues, and provide a great opportunity to attract and involve new people. Guest speakers can be other Amnesty staff or activists (such as Country Specialists or Student Area Coordinators), representatives from other organizations, authors, or visitors from other countries. They can be from your local community, from another part of the United States, or international. There are countless people who have knowledge and experience on various human rights issues who might be available to talk to your group. To identify speakers on particular topics or issues, use your imagination and talk to Amnesty staff or other activists. Remember to consult the relevant AIUSA country specialist if you're thinking about inviting a speaker from another country.

Tips to remember:

- Begin planning for a speaker event at least two to four months ahead of time and set clear goals for your event.
- When inviting speakers, be clear about what you want them to discuss.
- Clarify whether there is a fee or other expenses your group will need to cover and how and when the speaker expects to be paid.
- Develop an agenda for the event with clear times and roles. Don't forget to leave time at the beginning of the event to give an introduction to Amnesty and at the end to ask people to take action and join.
- Plan time for a question and answer period after the speaker's talk, and think of other creative ways to encourage audience participation, such as breaking into small discussion groups.
- Assign someone to act as a host for the guest and make sure they find out a little about the speaker's background.
- Communicate clearly and regularly with the speaker before the event to get information about him or her, and share information about your group and the event.
- Develop a recruitment plan, which includes reaching out to new people whom you think the speaker will attract.
- Include a plan for signing people in at the event and for following up with newcomers.
- If possible, arrange to meet speakers when they arrive, and take them to their hotel or other destination.
- Once speakers arrive, plan to spend time with them to prepare for the event.
- Allow time for the speaker to eat if food will be served at the event.
- Before the event, devise a system to let the speaker know when time is running out. Keep time during the speech.
- If your speaker is attending multiple events, allow breaks in between speaking engagements.
- If hosting for more than one day, remember to schedule some free time and stick to it.
- Provide suggestions of activities and events for the speaker to do in your hometown during free time.
- Remember the speaker may be away from home for a long time and need access to shopping, laundry facilities, and other basic conveniences.
- Try to connect the speaker to groups they may be interested in networking with.

Questions to Ask the Speaker

1. What is their complete contact information?
 - Address
 - Phone
 - Email
 - How to contact in an emergency
2. Where are they from?
3. How did they get their expertise or experience?
4. Will they send a resume or curriculum vitae AND a brief bio?
5. What is their connection, if any, to Amnesty International?
6. What is the cost to the group?
 - Honoraria
 - Travel
 - Accommodations
 - Other expenses

Specific Considerations for Working with Trauma Survivors

Here are a few items to keep in mind when working directly with survivors of trauma.

A speaker may opt to discuss traumatic experiences as part of educating others about reducing stress for a trauma survivor. The speaker may choose to share or not with the organizing team if they are a survivor of trauma; the team should just be alert and sensitive that many human rights defenders have endured trauma-related human rights abuses.

Remember that there may be trauma survivors in the audience as well; consider all of these suggestions:

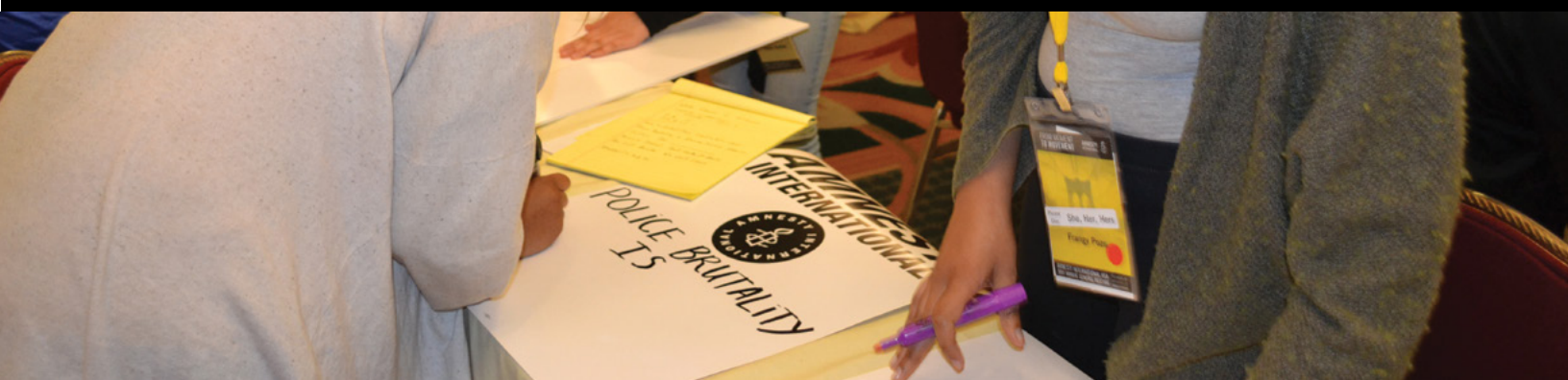
- Use the term “survivor” and not “victim.” The term “survivor” places emphasis on the fact that they made it through the trauma. Instead of dwelling on the act itself, it gives power to the endurance of the human spirit.
- Avoid suggesting that one type of trauma or violence is worse than another. This can be seen as offensive or divisive.
- Allow the speaker to have some control over the speaking environment. Torture is designed to make someone feel powerless, and when survivors are in a situation they feel they have no control over, they may begin to feel distressed. Ask survivors (and other speakers) what you can do to make them feel more comfortable during the event, such as setting the room up in a certain way, adjusting lighting, providing water, or offering moral support.
- Tell survivors – and the moderator – they do not have to answer any questions they do not want to answer, and discuss polite ways that the speaker and the moderator can deflect unwanted or unpleasant questions.
- Know that the survivor may suddenly need to take a time-out to collect him/herself to get a moment of privacy.

Be aware of “triggers.”

“Triggers” are things that remind survivors of their torture. When triggered, a survivor may start reliving the emotional and physical trauma of the torture. Be aware that this may happen, that she might want to take a break, and might need empathetic support.

Some examples of triggers are:

- **Extremely assertive questions:** These can remind the survivor of the questions their torturers asked. They can be avoided by having a moderator direct the flow of the questions.
- **Consistent eye contact:** This can remind a survivor of being stared at by a torturer.
- **Emotionally charged language:** This can make the speaker extremely uncomfortable, and can be prevented by keeping a consistent tone to the event. The use of a calm tone by a moderator and other speakers will set the tone for the rest of the event.
- **Audio or video equipment:** These are often used during torture and can traumatize a survivor. Ask the speaker if s/he is comfortable with this equipment in the room. S/he may simply prefer that it be placed in a certain area of the room or want to know ahead of time that it will be there.
- **Certain types of lighting:** Very bright or flashing lights are often used during interrogations. Ask the survivor if s/he prefers that a certain type of lighting be used.



7. Do they have any dietary restrictions and/or special needs?
8. What equipment do they need for their presentation? (e.g., slide projector)
9. Do they have a preference for how the room is set up?
10. Can you take photos of them?
11. Are they available to do interviews with press?
12. Can they provide a photo to use for flyers or other promotional materials?
13. Is there anything else they need to feel comfortable?

Information to Share with the Speaker:

1. Contact person and contact information
 - Address
 - Phone Number
 - Email
 - How to contact in case of an emergency
2. Group name and number
3. Idea of what your group has been working on
4. Goals for the event
5. How long your group has been in existence
6. A complete agenda for the event
7. Number of members in your group
8. Number of people expected at event
9. A description of the expected audience

HOW TO: Stage a Protest

For decades, individuals with a cause have used protest as a form of resistance. Protesting entails gathering a number of individuals together to make a public display to bring attention to the cause. It requires careful organizing, strategic planning, and a clear objective. A protest can occur in front of the White House, on a college campus, outside of the workplace, or at a public park. The location should correspond with the audience the protest is meant to address, and with the number of people the protest must accommodate. Your group's message or cause must be at the center of the demonstration, and should inspire the participants to lend their presence, voices, and time.

Tips to Remember:

- Protests are meant to make a statement. Bringing visual aids such as posters, photos, megaphones, and banners will draw attention to your cause, and can be used to disseminate information to the average passerby, or your target audience. Larger installations like art displays and coordinated physical actions are great ways to involve all members of the protest and provide an opportunity for the action to be published on media platforms.
- While protests may be fun, they take a lot of planning. A successful protest has a clear target and a clear ask—think of where your target will be at the time of the protest, and how you will present your ask to them.
- A protest is not simply a gathering of like-minded people. While some protests require a large crowd, be thoughtful about whom you reach out to attend, and why their presence is necessary.
- Have members of your planning committee at the protest prepared to keep participants organized, facilitate the action, and keep the plan on track. Disorganized actions will distract from the demonstration and the cause.
- While gathering a group together and taking to the streets is inspired and fun, protesting requires first thinking of logistical concerns. Often permits are needed to demonstrate on property, media sources should be contacted beforehand if your organization desires their attention, materials must be assembled before the action, and your organization should take transportation accessibility into consideration when choosing a location.
- If your protest will include testimonials, stories, or personal accounts, be conscious of the way voices are amplified. If survivors of the abuses you are protesting are present, make sure their presence is respected and their voices are on the frontline.
- Keep track of who attends; they will be more likely to participate in future Amnesty events.

- As a general rule, Amnesty does not undertake acts of civil disobedience as a form of activism. Amnesty International is bound to ensure that its campaigning activities comply with the law.

HOW TO: Use Street Theater

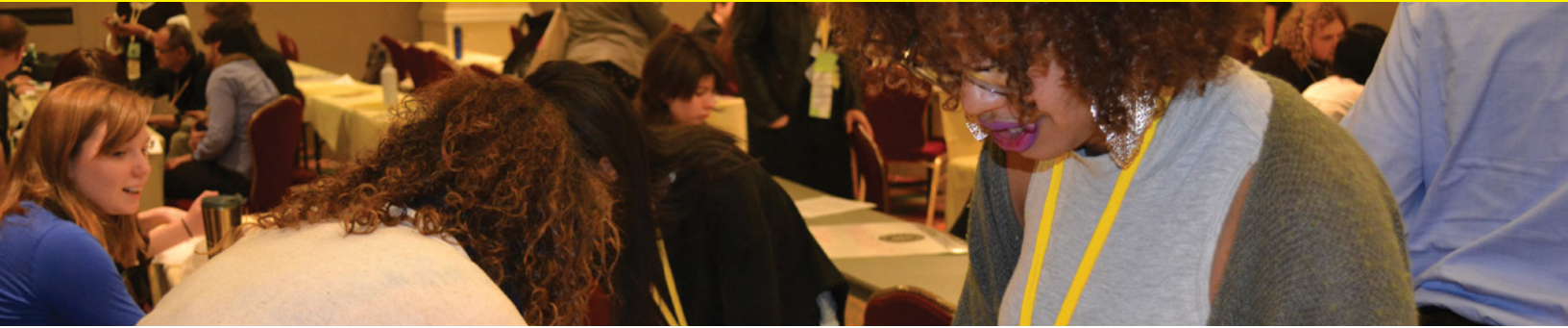
Street theater is an activity where members of your group act out a short story in a public location to educate passers-by about the group's work. To draw attention to a particular issue, create a skit illustrating a point. Street theater can be performed on a sidewalk or in a park or on the street (if it's closed off for an event), or other locations such as a hallway between classes. Costumes or other props can be used. Groups are cautioned to review the note on "Mock Abductions" below; however, and to avoid any Street Theater events that might cause passers-by to mistakenly think that real violence is occurring.

Tips to remember:

- Designate someone to pass out leaflets regarding the issue on which your group is focusing and information about the related events that your group has planned.
- Designate several people to answer questions from passers-by.
- To reach more people, make the skit short and act it out several times, with short breaks in between. The breaks will also give viewers an opportunity to ask questions.



AIUSA GROUPS



All About Local Groups

Since the early days of Amnesty International, local groups have been the mainstay of our activism and the backbone of the organization. Local groups have always been at the forefront when it comes to speaking out for people whom governments would silence. Using a variety of tools to promote and defend human rights, they write letters, circulate petitions, and activate their communities into action.

AIUSA local groups are representatives of Amnesty International. They work with local media, lobby public officials, organize events, work in coalition with other organizations, and raise money for AIUSA.

Local groups are community-based. They bring together people of different backgrounds, including teachers, professionals, retirees, students and many others to work as a team for the promotion of human rights. Close involvement with their communities provides local group activists with important resources for their work and an ideal foundation from which to tackle human rights abuses on a global scale. Local groups also help Amnesty's membership grow by recruiting members who strengthen Amnesty's capacity to win human rights victories.

Here are some quick facts about Amnesty local group activism:

- Amnesty International USA has about 250 local groups.
- Most groups send one or more representatives to AIUSA's Regional Conferences and Annual General Meeting to vote on policies and priorities.
- Local groups make a commitment to work long-term on Prisoners of Conscience or other individuals at risk.
- Local groups are the primary representatives of Amnesty International in their communities.

Being a local group member is a great opportunity to work with the world's largest human rights organization. Join a local group in your community today or start one yourself. Contact your Field Organizer to get connected with your local group, or to start one today!

Profile: Local Group #113, Chicago Loop, IL



Local group 113, located in Chicago, Illinois is known for their strong and determined leadership. Recently winning the Hironaka Award, the Chicago group transformed itself since 2010. They use their environment (in this case, a big city) in order to really get the public involved. For example, the group attends large festivals, concerts, and vigils. Their presence on social media is also strong, which helps with promoting their group to the public. The Chicago group also is committed to diversity, branching out and collaborating with other groups on different human right issues ranging from those with local resonance, (gun violence and police abuses) to those with international resonance (the conflict in Syria). Lastly, they show good skills of communication with the rest of AIUSA by seeking guidance and applying for a grant from AIUSA's Special Initiatives Fund. Group 113 shows how important branching out to the community and thinking outside the box is for the success of a local group.

Organizing Tips: Every group should create a system to learn about the interests, skills and network connections of its members. For example, when new people come to meetings or express interest, have them fill out a brief form that identifies contact information, interests, availability, skills and affiliations. Have someone from the group talk individually with new members at their first meeting to find out why they came, what they're interested in and how they would like to be involved in the future. This contact can also be made through one-on-one phone calls. Remember also to invite all new group members to join AIUSA as a dues-paying member.

STUDENTS



Photo by Cindy Trinh

All About Student Groups

When it comes to speaking out for human rights and demanding accountability and justice, Amnesty youth are on the front lines! AIUSA's vibrant student groups undertake a wide range of activities—from public demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns, to human rights education to lobbying government representatives. They also work to grow the organization through recruiting new members. Student members are essential participants in Amnesty's decision-making processes such as resolutions at the Annual General Meeting. You have real opportunities to participate at all levels of Amnesty International's worldwide movement.

Here are some facts about Amnesty student activism:

- AIUSA has nearly 750 student chapters all over the country.
- Student groups meet their campus communities where they are; from Amnesty concerts to film Screenings, they find innovative ways to advocate, educate and mobilize.
- AIUSA proves that students have the power to tackle injustice globally. All you have to do is get involved with an AIUSA student group today—or start one of your own!

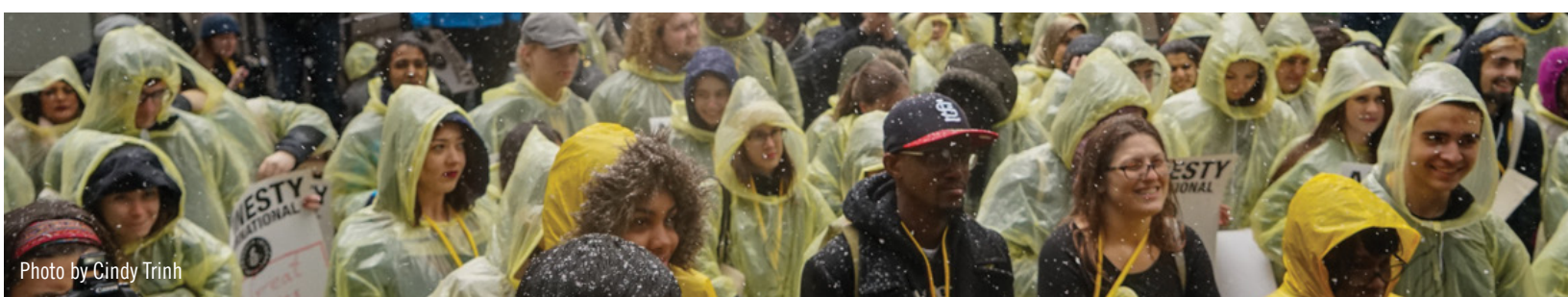


Photo by Cindy Trinh

Profile: College of William & Mary

One great example of a student group that is dedicated to human rights and is making a huge impact is this year's Student Activist Award winner, the College of William and Mary chapter. This compassionate group has made huge strides over two years. From growing from a 5-person, discussion-based group to a group of 30 active members who lobby and raise awareness around campus, this group has shown their comment and passion for human rights. Recently this group challenged themselves by lobbying Senator Tim Kaine (D), Senator Mark Warner (D), and Representative Rob Wittman (R) on the International Violence Against Women Act and the End Racial Profiling Act. On their campus they have also held multiple call-ins and write-ins to lobby government officials to end the death penalty and to free prisoners of conscience. Along with lobbying, they worked hard sharing photos and raising awareness about police abuses in Ferguson, MO. The success of the William and Mary group shows that hard work and commitment to a cause goes a long way and leads to a successful outcome.



Photo by Cindy Trinh

Staying Involved After Graduation

Your place in the human rights movement shouldn't end when you graduate. Young Professional Amnesty International (YPAI) Groups and Local Groups are terrific ways to stay connected and engaged.

Consider one of the many leadership roles in AIUSA, including Area Coordinator, Legislative Coordinator, State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator, or Country/Thematic Specialist, among others!

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (YPAI) GROUPS

YPAI engages and supports Amnesty activists from diverse backgrounds entering the working world. This dynamic young professionals group provides Amnesty and other human rights activists a space to network, organize and contribute to the struggle for human rights in the US and abroad.

Here are some facts about YPAI:

- YPAI networks are springing up in cities across the US, and many of them are led by former member leaders!
- YPAI bridges AIUSA activists who have graduated out of student groups and other young professionals with a common passion for human rights!
- YPAI provides unique networking activities, such as Human Rights Happy Hours, Amnesty BBQs, and Human Rights Film Screenings

Profile: New York City, NY

Summarizing our group: NYC-YPAI is a mix of volunteers and new-to-Amnesty potential activists. Many of our members were previously affiliated with Amnesty in their younger days, i.e. high school or college, and have returned to the Amnesty fold with a renewed desire to fight for human rights both in the U.S. and abroad. We also have a number of YPAIers who are new to Amnesty but have always felt the call to advocate for human rights and want to support Amnesty in that endeavor. Our members are typically in the age range of mid 20s to late 30s, but all are welcome at our events and meetings!

Recent successes: NYC-YPAI have held a number of events on a variety of Amnesty issues, including LGBT rights (Make a Date with Amnesty event in February 2012), the Arms Trade Treaty (Rooftop event in July 2013), “Arab Spring” Uprising (speaker panel event in October 2011) and Guantanamo (Happy Hour event in Summer 2014). We have also held a Career Night (April 2014) and several lobby trainings (2012-2015). Our events draw a varied crowd of old and new Amnesty members, as well as those new to Amnesty. Our aims are community education, awareness and call to action. Our members and guests have signed dozens of petitions, learned crucial lobbying skills and career tips, engaged in informed and inspiring conversation with our notable guest speakers and have used their newfound knowledge to advocate on these issues in their communities.

Tips for Other YPAIs: Hold events that focus on a number of goals, i.e. education/awareness, socializing, networking and skills building. This will attract the largest demographic in a given community. Also reach out to the AC/SAC/FO and other local groups to cross-promote events and spread Amnesty’s impact. Advertise on the AIUSA Event page, local newspaper, and other social media and print forum. Create a YPAI Meetup account and Facebook(FB) page for your group and have a guest sign up at every event to compile an email listserv for all members. In between events, be sure to promote events on your Meetup/FB pages to keep your members engaged with YPAI and willing to return for future events.

-- Anita Teekah



RUN YOUR GROUP

This section provides comprehensive information for groups on recruiting and retaining members, as well as valuable tips for planning and setting group goals, fundraising and holding effective meetings. This section will also help groups involve members of diverse backgrounds and work effectively with other organizations.

This section includes:

- How to Hold an Effective Meeting
- How to Recruit and Retain Members: A Sample Recruitment Plan
- How to Build Diversity
- How to Grow the Movement
- How to Promote Your Group
- How to Use Technology to Build Your Group
- Coalition Building 101
- Know Your Rights while Organizing

Get more tips and ideas for how to run your group at:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/lead-in-your-community/activist-tools>

How to Hold an Effective Meeting

Effective meetings are characterized by three key elements: solid planning, good facilitation and thorough follow-up.

PLANNING- (Add planning sheet template to help organize)

Step 1 - Determine what type of meeting you are going to have. What is the purpose?

Step 2 - Review your group's priorities and plan your meeting accordingly. Be sure to identify clear goals and draft an agenda before the meeting keeping time in mind.

Sample Agenda:

- Introductions - Group Check-in
- Set Group Agreements/ Safe Space Terms
- Overview of Agenda- updates, campaigns, actions
- Open floor for ideas/ go over goals
- Planning time for upcoming events/actions
- Voting if necessary
- Wrap up, and create an accountability to-do list
- Questions and Reminders

Step 3 - Determine meeting location. Create a comfortable and accessible space.

Step 4 - Set a date and time all members can meet.

FACILITATING

- Make every meeting enjoyable and efficient. Have energy!
- Be prepared and STAY ORGANIZED
- Stick to the agenda. Meetings that get off-track are often unproductive.
- Be flexible.
- Encourage participation. Seek commitment. Get members to sign up for tabling, action committees and other specific tasks. Build ownership.

FOLLOW UP

- Make follow-up a priority after your meetings.
- Call or email members who missed the meeting. Provide them with updates and agenda. Ask if they would like to volunteer for any upcoming events or actions.
- Call new people who came to the meeting, thank them for their participation, and ask if they have any further questions you can address.
- If a large number of new members showed up, send thank you notes or emails with an invitation to the next event or meeting.
- If a big event is coming up, update members on how the planning is going and send reminders of all important dates and times. Hold your group accountable!

How to Recruit and Retain Members

Sample Plan of Action for Recruitment

Fall Recruitment Plan: Key Dates and Events

- **August 1st: Common Ground State Fair - Host an action table**

Needs: Banner, two case petitions, sign-up sheets, 50 Save the Date cards for September 18th Group Meeting, Stickers/Buttons/T-shirts for donations

- o Goal: 100 petition signatures
- o Goal: Get 50 people to sign up for events/ action email list
- o Goal: 10 people to commit to Meeting on September 18th

Follow-up: August 2nd

- o Enter names into spreadsheet and email folks who signed-up
- o Send in signed petitions to AIUSA

- **September 15th: Organizations Fair - Host a booth!**

Needs: Amnesty Banner, Computer with Excel spreadsheet for group sign-up, 100 Save the Date cards for September 18th Group Meeting, General-information poster board, Stickers/Buttons/T-shirts for give-away

- o Goal: 75 Email List Sign-up
- o Goal: Get 25 people to commit to Meeting on September 18th

Follow-up: September 15th

- o Email recruits "Welcome to Our Human Rights Activist Community" message
- o Remind folks about the September 18th Group Meeting / Social
- o Include Poll about favorite snacks! And any accessibility needs

- **September 18th: Group Meeting / Interest Social - Social**

Needs: Light Snacks, drinks, background "About Amnesty" slideshow, petition/action, guest speaker, draft a light agenda

- o Pre-event promotion:
 - o School & Local Paper;
 - o Email Blast;
 - o Social Media;
 - o Flyers in local faith communities and community stores
 - o Reach out to Field Organizer for additional ideas / outreach connections
- o Goal: 30 people attend & bond
- o Goal: Talks about opportunities to become a volunteer leader within group and AIUSA.

- o Goal: Have 8 people sign up to help organize/coordinate October 12th event
- o Goal: Have 15 people sign on to bringing a friend along to October 12th event.

Follow-up: September 19th

- o Email mailing list
 - o Thank everyone for coming
 - o Include link to action taken
 - o Include poster/flyer to the October 12th event
- o Send signed petitions back to relevant AIUSA program.

TIP: Host in a public, accessible and visible space to attract passersby. Be in contact with your fields organizer from the planning stages so they may provide additional support and any resources you may need!

• **October 12th: Event 1: Death Penalty Mock Executions**

Recruitment Goals

- o Needs: Sign-up sheet, Save the Date Cards for next meeting
- o Goal: Get an additional 15 people to join email list
- o Goal: 5 more people at next meeting

Recruitment Follow-up

- o Email everyone, plus new additions
 - o Thank for coming out
 - o Include info about next meeting
- o Recognize the individual members who led, volunteered and participated in demo.

How to Build Diversity

What Is Diversity?

Diversity includes people of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, ages, economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation and physical and mental abilities. We work to ensure that members of different social identities are represented, can fully and freely participate in all aspects of the organization and are treated fairly and equally.

Why Is Diverse Organizational Development Important to Amnesty International?

Amnesty International's integrity, sustainability and effectiveness as a human rights organization depend on our commitment to diversity. Respecting human rights means nurturing an environment where people from all backgrounds can fully and freely participate and are equally valued. Moreover, to effectively confront human rights violators, we must understand the causes of human rights violations. Often, unjust social systems—i.e., systems of oppression like racism, classism and sexism—are at the root, and when we can identify those causes, we are better equipped to find effective solutions.

What Strategies Encourage Diversity?

- To build diversity into recruitment efforts, reach out to a variety of people of different backgrounds and identities. Consider, for example, tabling at a wide variety of locations with appropriate materials and actions or through targeted events, speaking engagements and actions.
- Encourage members to seek and form relationships with a variety of people.
- Be prepared to alter the way your group works (e.g., where it meets) to become more inclusive.
- Collaborate with other groups who have a commitment to diversity and principles of impartiality.

How to Promote Your Group

Promoting your group is an important ongoing process. Reaching out lets everyone know that AIUSA is at work in the community and serves as an invitation to collaborate in the fight for human rights. Here are a few suggestions:

- Be creative!
- Increase Visibility
 - o Be visible on your campus or in your community. The more active you are, the more people will want to work with you. Tabling and hosting events are great promotional tools.
 - o Increase visibility when you publicize events and activities by using social media, flyers and emails, and by placing ads in your local or school newspaper.

[**TIP:** hosting your meeting in a public, visible space is a great way to attract new interest!]

- Make One-on-One Contact
 - o Use a sign-in sheet whenever you host an event or work a table. Be sure to follow up within one week with each person who attended or expressed interest. Encourage their participation in your next event, and ask them about their interests.
- Hold an Informational Meeting
 - o Plan an introductory agenda about human rights and Amnesty International, and advertise the meeting in your community or on your campus.
 - o Remember that hungry people don't pay as much attention—so offer snacks, coffee and sodas!



Coalition Building 101

1. Identify the issue you want to work on. Here are a few questions your group should answer:
 - a. What are Amnesty International's policies and goals on this issue?
 - b. What are your group's particular goals on this issue?
 - c. What do you hope to accomplish on this issue?

Develop a strategy for inviting others to join you in the very beginning stages of your planning. Honor the work that organizations have been doing before Amnesty.

Be clear and upfront about your interests and expectations, and remember to listen equally to their interests and expectations. Coalition building should be transformative not transactional.

Assign responsibilities. After each meeting, make sure that tasks are divided according to each person's abilities and interest.

[illegible]

DESCRIPTIONS OF MEMBER LEADERS

Area Coordinators (AC)

Provide support for the Local Groups in a geographical area; sometimes an entire state, sometimes an area with a large population. They work very closely with Field Organizers and their regional office staff. Area Coordinators give Local Groups a connection to the greater world of Amnesty International beyond their immediate and state boundaries, advising on event organizing and other advocacy work.

Area Coordinator Steering Committee (ACSC)

The Area Coordinator Steering Committee of Amnesty International USA connects Area Coordinators (AC's) to resources that will aid their human rights work, and represents ACs' needs and experiences in regional and national decision-making bodies. Each of the five AC's on the ACSC represents one of the five regions of AIUSA. The Committee also communicates and makes recommendations on issues of policy in their regions, provides training opportunities and mentoring, and attends AIUSA conferences.

Country/Thematic Specialists

Part of a corps of volunteer leaders who serve as country or issue experts and strategists for Amnesty International, these specialists develop a solid understanding of AI's concerns in the target country or issue, and may be called upon to represent the organization in relevant forums.

Country and Thematic Specialists are organized into 21 Coordination Groups (Co-groups), which collectively cover nearly every country, as well as several thematic issues including: (1) Business and Human Rights; (2) LGBT Human Rights; (3) Military/Security/Police transfers; and (4) Women's Human Rights. Coordination Group members commit to working for at least two years in their position.

National Youth Action Committee (NYAC)

Envisions a powerful, inspiring and sustainable grassroots youth movement working through an intersectional framework to advance human rights both at home and abroad. NYAC consists of one Regional Representative from each of the five AIUSA regions: West, Mid-Atlantic, South, Midwest and Northeast. NYAC representatives work on both their delegated regional level and the national level on youth leadership development and youth engagement.

State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators (SDPAC)

Keeps AI groups, volunteer leaders, and staff informed of death penalty news in their state and mobilizes activists to take action when executions are scheduled. Additionally, the SDPAC will mobilize activists to engage in grassroots legislative advocacy.

State Legislative Coordinators (LC)

Engage U.S. political leaders to stand up for human rights. These volunteer leaders work with AI members and advocacy staff to lobby Members of Congress and other key officials on legislation and initiatives to safeguard rights and protect people at risk.

Student Activist Coordinator (SAC)

An experienced Amnesty International student or youth volunteer who represents the organization to assigned groups by serving as an advisor to student and youth groups on group activities, campaign opportunities and policy related issues; acts as a liaison between AI groups, staff and other volunteer leaders; promotes area-wide initiatives; and acts as a spokesperson for AI where appropriate. Contact your regional office to learn

Young Professionals Amnesty International Networks (YPAI)

Engages and supports Amnesty activists from diverse backgrounds entering the working world. This dynamic young professionals group provides Amnesty and other human rights activists a space to network, organize and contribute to the struggle for human rights in the US and abroad.

Fellowships

Ladis Kristof Memorial Fellowship for Organizing and Activism

Amnesty International USA is proud to strengthen and expand Ladis Kristof's legacy and honor his lifelong commitment to human rights by joining the Kristof family in supporting the Ladis Kristof Memorial Fellowship for Organizing and Activism, a fellowship to honor and inspire a new generation of human rights defenders.

Ladis Kristof's personal generosity and determination inspired many: family and friends, colleagues and students, and the human rights activists of Amnesty International USA's Portland, Oregon Local Group #48.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/about-us/grants-and-awards/ladis-kristof-memorial-fellowship>

Fellowship Description

One exceptional Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) student activist will receive the Kristof Fellowship for his or her outstanding efforts on behalf of human rights. The Fellow will be awarded a ten-week residency with an AIUSA Regional Field Organizer with whom she or he will work closely on individual cases, human rights crises, and grassroots organizing and campaigning at the regional and national level. The Fellowship will promote a deeper understanding of human rights work, strengthen the Fellow's organizing and advocacy skills, and further prepare her or him to be an effective life-long activist.

The Fellow's residency expenses for the ten-week period, including airfare to and from the New York or DC office, will be covered. The Fellowship resides within the Member Engagement Unit of the Membership Mobilization Department.

Young Leaders Fellowship

In order for AIUSA to expand our capacity for effective youth engagement, we are recruiting a Young Leaders Fellow. This program will establish the infrastructure to grow and empower passionate young leaders who challenge and activate their peers locally and worldwide. The purpose of the program is to build a flexible foundation for large-scale, self-sustaining, youth-led organizing initiatives. With a focus on deepening AIUSA's relationships with youth members, Young Leaders Fellows will create and use innovative tools, platforms, and initiatives to engage youth activists, develop youth leadership, and grow AIUSA's youth movement.

Fellowship Description:

The Young Leaders Fellowship is a one-year, paid fellowship that aims to develop the next generation of human rights leaders and build capacity for membership growth. Fellows will channel their commitment to human rights and social justice, and their unique skill-sets into building a diverse and powerful AIUSA youth membership. Fellows will use innovative tools to effectively engage youth in new organizing initiatives on campuses and in communities across the country. They will train and develop member leaders, organize in youth-only spaces and beyond, and seek out new ways to make AIUSA a part of youth lives.

<https://careers.aiusa.org/vacancy/young-leaders-fellowship-0204/230/description/>

APPENDICES

Sample General Meeting Agenda

Amnesty International – Central High School – October 25, 2003

1 hour, 15 minutes*

AGENDA

WELCOME

BEFORE MEETING BEGINS

1. INTRODUCTION/ ICEBREAKER 10 min
(pass around a sign up sheet at this time)

2. Review the agenda for the current meeting 5 min

3. Announce the group's successes and those of AI in general 5 min

4. Old Business 5-10 min
Review the items discussed and decisions made at the previous meeting.
This ensures that everyone has the same basic information, builds accountability, and allows people who were absent a chance to catch up.

5. New Business 15 min

6. Human Rights Action 15 min

7. Wrap up 5 min

Meet and greet

Have "old-timers" and/or group leaders assist in greeting everyone as they enter. Engage new members in pre-meeting discussion to make them feel welcome and to learn about them.

Why use a sign-in sheet?

Any non-core members attending? The sign-in sheet is your record of who attended which meetings. It allows you to get contact information so you can follow up with new people about participating in future meetings and activities.

A small but important step!

Reviewing the agenda and asking members if they have questions or comments creates group support for the agenda and clarifies expectations about what will be discussed. This step also shows if there is enough support for each item or if there is something else that is more important that the group wants to discuss. Depending on what needs to be accomplished at the meeting items can be added or subtracted.

How are the group's projects progressing?

This is the time to check in on current or future projects. Use the time not only to inform group members, but also to recruit volunteers for the group's work, (e.g. sign people up for tabling, demonstrations, or to help with other events). You could include a report from various committees. If time allows, you could start this section of the agenda with quick (10-15 minute) subcommittee or working group check in meetings. Have each committee or group report out on their progress.

Why? We all know each other, right?

Giving each person a chance to be seen and heard can create a sense of belonging and participation. When conducted routinely (whether or not there are new people), introductions and icebreakers give younger and quieter members practice speaking out in the group. This can help build confidence and comfort in participating in meetings.

But introductions are so boring!

Sure they are if people only say their names -- that is where icebreakers come in. Introductions and icebreakers provide techniques for getting to know each other better, determining people's expectations, introducing an idea to be examined during the meeting, or simply waking people up and recharging their batteries.

Take time to celebrate!

Human rights activism is challenging work. Think of ways to build your group's morale by recognizing hard work and the goals you accomplish. If 500 postcards were written for the Holiday Card Action, announce it. If five non-core members participated in an activity, celebrate that! If AI reports a prisoner has been released or an important law passed, share the good news. (To receive current information on a bi-weekly basis, subscribe to Amnesty Online at:

Next meetings

Announce the next meeting's date, time and place.

Summarize the meeting results and follow up

Wrap up with a summary of all decisions reached, individual/subcommittee assignments and deadlines.

Thank people

Acknowledge those who played a hand in preparing for the meeting. Thank everyone for coming and participating.

*Adjust the times as necessary.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) a common standard for all people and all nations. The UDHR describes in clear and simple terms the rights that belong equally to every person. These rights belong to you. Familiarize yourself with them, then help to promote and defend them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Right to equality | 15. Right to a nationality and freedom to change it |
| 2. Freedom from discrimination | 16. Right to marriage and family |
| 3. Right to life, liberty and personal security | 17. Right to own property |
| 4. Freedom from slavery | 18. Freedom of belief and religion |
| 5. Freedom from torture and degrading treatment | 19. Freedom of opinion and information |
| 6. Right to recognition as a person before the law | 20. Right of peaceful assembly and association |
| 7. Right to equality before the law | 21. Right to participate in government and in free elections |
| 8. Right to remedy by competent tribunal | 22. Right to social security |
| 9. Freedom from arbitrary arrest or exile | 23. Right to desirable work and to join trade unions |
| 10. Right to a fair public hearing | 24. Right to rest and leisure |
| 11. Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty | 25. Right to adequate living standards |
| 12. Freedom from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence | 26. Right to education |
| 13. Right to free movement in and out of any country | 27. Right to participate in cultural life and community |
| 14. Right to asylum in other countries from persecution | 28. Right to social order ensuring human rights |
| | 29. Community duties essential to free and full development |
| | 30. Freedom from state and personal interference in the above rights |

Amnesty International believes that governments should adhere to all these principles so the the promise of the UDHR can be fulfilled. Through the tireless work of our membership, Amnesty International commits itself to making the vision of the UDHR a reality for every citizen of every country in the world.

MEMBERSHIP MOBILIZATION DEPARTMENT

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FIELD ORGANIZER

AK, AS, NORTHERN CA, GU, HI, MT, NV

FIELD ORGANIZER

AZ, NM, OR, UT, WA, SOUTHERN CA, CO, ID, WY

MIDWEST REGION

ERNEST COVERSON

FIELD ORGANIZER

IA, IN, KS, MI, MO, ND, SD

VACANT

ASSOCIATE FIELD ORGANIZER

IL, KY, MN, NE, OH, WI

NORTHEAST REGION

CYNTHIA GABRIEL WALSH

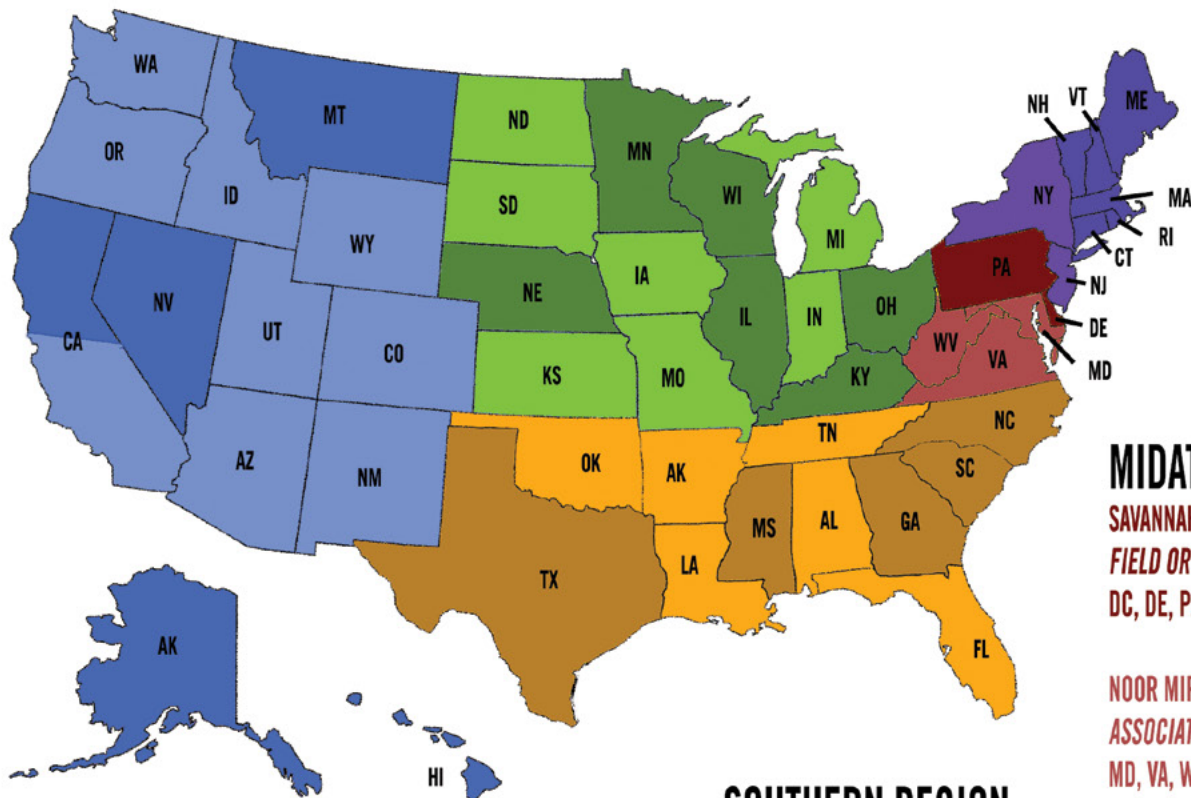
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SOUTHERN REGION

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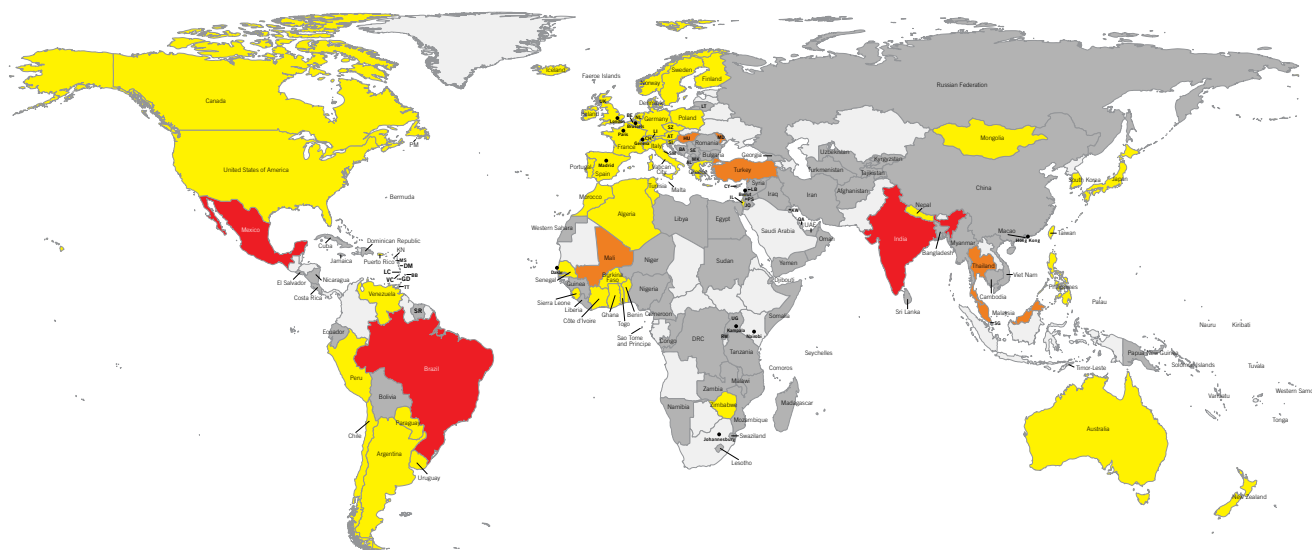
FIELD DIRECTOR

MIDWEST REGION

MIDATLANTIC REGION

SOUTHERN REGION

A GLOBAL MOVEMENT



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Brussels
Dakar
Geneva
Hong Kong
Johannesburg

Kampala
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Madrid
Nairobi
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Czech Republic (CZ)
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Faeroe Islands
Finland
France

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Ghana
Greece/Hong Kong
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Occupied Palestinian
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Nepal
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America
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Bosnia and
Herzegovina (BK)
Bulgaria
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China
Comoros
Congo (Republic of)
Costa Rica
Cuba
Cyprus (CY)
Djibouti
Dominica (DM)

Dominican Republic
DRC (Democratic
Republic of the Congo)
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Egypt
El Salvador
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Grenada (GD)
Guatemala
Guinea
Iran
Iraq
Jamaica
Jordan (JO)
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Kuwait (KW)
Kyrgyzstan
Lebanon (LB)

Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Liechtenstein (LI)
Lithuania (LT)
Macao
Macedonia (MK)
Madagascar
Malawi
Malta
Montenegro
Montserrat (MS)
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nauru
Nicaragua

Niger
Nigeria
Oman
Palau
Palestine (State of) (PS)
Papua New Guinea
Qatar
Romania
Russian Federation
Rwanda (RW)
Saint Kitts and
Nevis (KN)
Saint Lucia (LC)
St Vincent &
The Grenadines (VC)
San Marino (SM)
Sao Tome and
Principe

Saudi Arabia
Serbia (SE)
Seychelles
Singapore (SG)
Solomon Islands
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Suriname (SR)
Swaziland
Syria
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Timor-Leste
Tonga
Trinidad and
Tabago (TT)
Turkmenistan

Tuvalu
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
Uzbekistan
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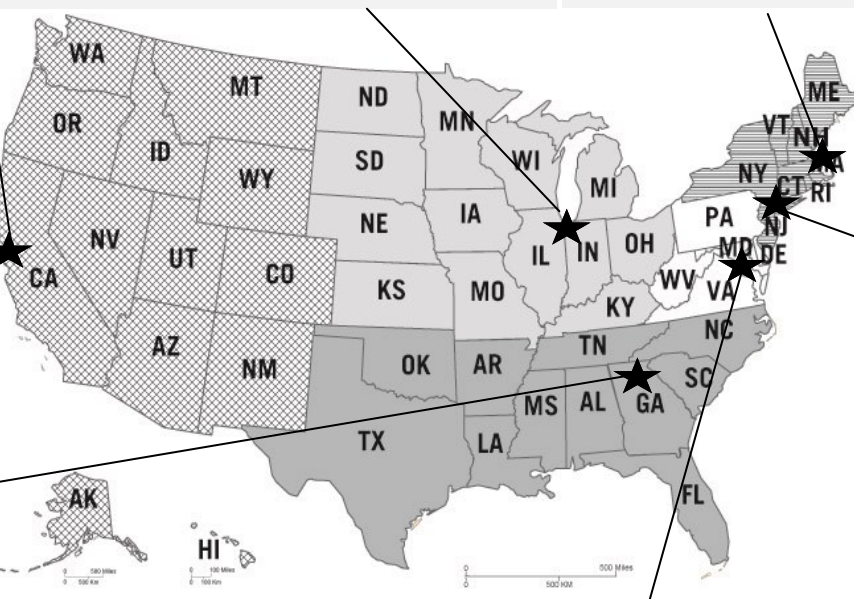
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Get Connected

Online Resources –

www.amnestyusa.org The Amnesty International USA website is updated daily with the latest news, events, actions and campaign information.

- **Find events:** Learn about nationwide AIUSA events and to post your own events at www.amnestyusa.org/events
- Sign up to become an **Activist 2.0** and use social networks, bookmarking sites and blogs to promote AIUSA's campaigns and actions.
- **Take action** online and sign up for the Human Rights Action Center at www.amnestyusa.org/act
- **Activist Resource Community (ARC)** - Get a password for the members-only area, where you can find internal documents: http://arc.amnestyusa.org/li/in/soc_rme=2&redir=p%2Fus%2Fin
- **Amnesty International Secretariat** contains additional news releases, full-text versions of all external reports since 1994, worldwide campaign information and more. www.amnesty.org
- **The Amnesty Volunteers** website is a forum for all Amnesty members and volunteers and provides additional information and links to Amnesty-related websites. www.amnesty-volunteer.org

Find a Local/Student Group:

To find a local group near you, follow the link:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/lead-in-your-community/local-groups/find-a-group>

Social Media Accounts:

- Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/amnesty>
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/AmnestyUSA>
- Instagram: <http://instagram.com/AmnestyUSA>
- YouTube: <http://youtube.com.com/amnestyusa>
- Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/user/aiusa>
- Tumblr: <http://amnestyusa.tumblr.com/>
- Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/amnestyusa>

