



# Taking Action

A guide to getting more involved  
in Amnesty International's work

Thank you for your interest in getting more involved in Amnesty's work.

Wherever you're located, however much time you have, there are many ways for everyone to participate.

Perhaps you occasionally have five or ten minutes to spare. If that's the case, you could visit our online Action Centre and add your name to an e-petition.

If you have an hour once a month, you might want to join the Urgent Action Network and respond to urgent appeals on behalf of people who are at imminent risk of human rights abuses.

And if you'd like to spend one evening a month sharing your interest for human rights with other Amnesty activists, why not join a local Amnesty group or Action Circle?

Please take a look through these pages to learn about the many ways to get more involved. If you have questions, please get in touch with us. Our phone number is

**1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)**

and our email address is **[members@amnesty.ca](mailto:members@amnesty.ca)**.

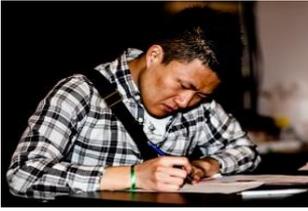


**Join our Online Community**

Follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/amnestycanada](https://facebook.com/amnestycanada)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/AmnestyNow](https://twitter.com/AmnestyNow)) for the latest news and action opportunities.

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## Letter writing really works!

Over the years, many former prisoners have told Amnesty how much letters written by Amnesty supporters have helped. They let us know that our pressure has had effect and led to improvements. In addition, the solidarity shown by Amnesty activists keeps hope alive. Hope is a precious weapon for prisoners battling to survive, for relatives trying to obtain justice or for human rights defenders carrying out their work despite danger and isolation.

### A few letter-writing tips

- Always be polite. Governments respond better to persuasion than to abuse.
- Assume that the government concerned is open to reason.
- Use your own words but follow strictly the instructions given by Amnesty International in the case in question. For instance, if you are asked to appeal for medical treatment for a prisoner, please request only this and not a speedy trial or release which might not be appropriate in this particular case.
- Give the impression that your concern for human rights is not politically biased in any way. Avoid expressing opposition to the policies of the government you are addressing.
- Personalize your appeal. Say who you are and what you do. Write in your own words. This shows that the letter is genuine.
- If you have any special interest or link with the country, mention it. For instance, you may have visited it or studied its history.
- Be brief. A simple, one line letter is adequate and is certainly better than no letter at all. A good rule is not to write more than one page. Long letters are less likely to be read and can be difficult for authorities whose first language is not English.

## I want to write letters. What should I do next?

Choose one or more of these options.

- Participate in the Urgent Action Network (page 6)
- Subscribe to *Activist* magazine and respond to the letter-writing appeals in each issue (page 14)
- Take action online at **[amnesty.ca/takeaction](https://www.amnesty.ca/takeaction)** (page 7)
- Join a local Amnesty Group or Action Circle (page 10)
- Take part in the global *Write for Rights* on December 10 (page 12)

## Lifesavers: Actions for young activists

*Lifesavers* are monthly actions for activists ages 9 and up. They are written in simple language and guide the writer through the need for a letter sometimes request appeals on behalf of other young people. A photo, map, suggested wording and links to further information are included. Graphic details of ill-treatment or torture are omitted.



View the current *Lifesaver* at  
**[amnesty.ca/get-involved/youth-activism/lifesaver](https://www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/youth-activism/lifesaver)**

To receive *Lifesavers* regularly, send your request to  
**[urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)**.

# The Urgent Action Network protects those whose human rights are at immediate risk



Amnesty campaigns for human rights in many ways, but when the immediate safety of someone is at risk, the method of choice is the Urgent Action Network. Participants send faxes, letters, emails and tweets to authorities around the world to protect individuals who are at risk of imminent human rights violations.

## Three ways to participate!

The most effective way to take action is to send a personal letter. This takes about 20 minutes but can have a lasting impact on someone's life. To join the Urgent Action Network, email "I want to join" to **[urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)** or call **416-363-9933 ext 325**. In your message, include your full name, your mailing address, and how often you would like us to send you UAs (most writers choose one per month).

If you have just five minutes to take action, we will send you online actions several times each month which have prepared messages you can personalize. To get on the list, email "Sign me up to the online UA" to **[urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)**.

If you have one minute to take action, and have an iPhone, download the Amnesty SOS app at **[amn.st/60178eGEF](https://amn.st/60178eGEF)** (Android version to come by end 2017). We will alert you to human rights emergencies as they arise.

## How do I find out more?

Visit **[amnesty.ca/get-involved/urgent-action-network](https://amnesty.ca/get-involved/urgent-action-network)** or email **[urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)**.

## **Amnesty's online Action Centre is a central hub for all the latest action opportunities**

One of the most convenient ways to take action for human rights is to visit the Action Centre pages of Amnesty International's website—**[amnesty.ca/takeaction](https://www.amnesty.ca/takeaction)**.

Here, you can join the hundreds of thousands of other Amnesty activists worldwide who are making a difference for human rights.

At the Action Centre main page, you can use the search function to select cases by issue, country or region. So whether you're interested in business and human rights or the crisis in Zimbabwe, you can quickly find relevant cases.

Each letter-writing case has background information, advice on what to include in your letter and addresses to send your letter.

The Action Centre pages also feature online petitions.

### **How do I use the online Action Centre?**

First go to **[amnesty.ca/takeaction](https://www.amnesty.ca/takeaction)**. Then search for actions by Issue, Country and/or Action Type (for example, online petitions or letter-writing actions).

## Protecting Individuals at Risk

Protecting the rights of individuals who are at risk of human rights violations has always been at the centre of Amnesty's human rights work. Our website and social media feeds feature some of the most pressing cases, and offer activists a way to participate online or through letter-writing actions.

### How can I find out more?

Join online at [amnesty.ca/our-work/individuals-risk](https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/individuals-risk).

## Amnesty International campaigns

For more than 50 years, Amnesty supporters have been campaigning to protect and promote human rights around the world. Today, Amnesty's campaign work is supported globally by more than three million supporters. Imagine the power of all those activists around the world calling for change. It works by each of us speaking out—then asking our friends, classmates and neighbours to do the same.

More information is available at [amnesty.ca/our-work/issues](https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/issues).

### How can I find out more?

Detailed information on all current campaigns can be found at [amnesty.ca](https://www.amnesty.ca). Check out our blog at [amnesty.ca/blog](https://www.amnesty.ca/blog) to find up-to-date coverage of recent campaign developments, successes and events.

# **Business and Human Rights: Holding corporations accountable**

All companies have a responsibility to respect human rights in their operations. This includes those of their subsidiaries and contractors. All governments have a duty to protect citizens who may be subject to human rights abuses due to corporate activity. When companies do not respect human rights, all people deserve the right to justice.

Too often companies contribute to human rights violations such as forced and child labour, pollution of the environment and especially of water supplies, forced evictions of Indigenous Peoples, destructive impacts on local communities, including exacerbating social conflict, abuse of individuals by private security forces, discrimination and unfair treatment of employees, and other human rights abuses.

We need your help:

- to advocate for strong national laws and international standards
- to ensure that corporations are held accountable when human rights violations occur
- to work with impacted communities to support their rights and ensure access to remedy
- to raise awareness of Business and Human Rights issues

Internet: **[amnesty.ca/business](https://www.amnesty.ca/business)**

Facebook: **AICanadaBHR**

Twitter: **AICanadaBHR**

Email Us: **[bhr@amnesty.ca](mailto:bhr@amnesty.ca)**

# **Amnesty International Groups and Action Circles: Meet other Amnesty supporters who share your interest in human rights**

Amnesty Groups and Action Circles are a vital part of Amnesty International's work.

The Groups and Action Circles are part of what makes Amnesty an effective grassroots organization and help ensure that Canada is a country that speaks out for the human rights of everyone.

There are about 90 Amnesty Groups and Action Circles in communities across Canada.

Each group is different. They range in size from only a few supporters to as many as one hundred. Many have their own web site and do fundraising in their own communities.

Groups and Action Circle engage in various activities. They:

- work on Amnesty's current campaigns
- raise awareness in their communities
- participate in letter-writing cases
- visit with your member of Parliament
- organize film screening and panel discussions

Whether you're an old hand at grassroots campaigning, or you've never done anything like this at all, you'll enjoy meeting like-minded people and really making a difference.

## **How can I find out more?**

To find your nearest group, go to [amnesty.ca/get-involved/community-activism/find-a-group-near-you](https://www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/community-activism/find-a-group-near-you) or contact the Activism Coordinator near you (page 20)



## **Amnesty's Youth and Student Program**

Amnesty International's Youth and Student Program is one of the largest, most exciting youth activist programs in Canada.

### **It's easy to get involved**

You can join or start an Amnesty group in your school. Groups organize music events and write-a-thons. They invite speakers and they write appeal letters and learn about human rights.

Groups can be entirely Amnesty focused. Or you can take on a variety of issues and receive Amnesty materials to support your human rights activism. Out there on your own? You can get involved as an individual instead of as a part of a group. This could involve writing letters, gathering signatures on petitions, writing articles, or giving presentations.

### **You'll receive lots of support from Amnesty**

Participants in the Youth program receive *Activist* magazine, Amnesty International's newsletter, plus *In The Mix*, the youth and student newsletter. You will also receive special Amnesty campaigning materials.

### **How can I find out more?**

Check out [amnesty.ca/youth](http://amnesty.ca/youth)

Email [youth@amnesty.ca](mailto:youth@amnesty.ca)

Call **1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)**



## ***Write for Rights!* Everyone can participate in Amnesty's global write-a-thon**

December 10 is International Human Rights Day. To mark this day, thousands of people across Canada and hundreds of thousands around the world take part in Amnesty International's Global *Write for Rights*—Amnesty's largest and best-known letter writing event.

The idea is beautifully simple. Either on their own, or at local events, people write a short letter or two to help protect another person's human rights. You can participate in *Write for Rights* as an individual or with friends, family, colleagues and classmates.

Every fall, you can register online at [amnesty.ca/writeathon](https://www.amnesty.ca/writeathon) where you will also find helpful advice, appeal cases and a variety of downloadable resources.



Get your friends, workmates and community together to drink tea and raise money for human rights. The beauty of holding an **AMNESTEA** is that it is simple and fun. All you need is an

hour or two to get the ball rolling. Just set yourself a fundraising target, invite guests and raise money through donations for tea and cake or sandwiches.

To register as an **AMNESTEA** host and receive your FREE kit, Contact us at [members@amnesty.ca](mailto:members@amnesty.ca)

## **Raise money for human rights! Use your talents to fundraise and increase awareness**

Whether it's knitting teddy bears, playing music, running, or baking cupcakes, you have it in you to support change in the world through your passions! Raising money for human rights doesn't have to mean organising a big event. It could be as simple as selling ice cream cones, or as ambitious as cycling across Canada. It all depends on what **you** love to do.

### **For the more adventurous: Charity Challenge**

Do you have some exciting plans on your bucket list such as taking a trek to Machu Picchu, or climbing Mount Kilimanjaro? Now there's a way to satisfy your spirit for adventure, while supporting human rights work. Visit [charitychallenge.ca](http://charitychallenge.ca) for more information.

**Want more ideas?** You can email or call us to order our fun, free booklet on fundraising ideas: '50 Ways to Raise Money for Human Rights', or download it from our web page at [amnesty.ca/donate/raise-money-for-human-rights](http://amnesty.ca/donate/raise-money-for-human-rights).



Find out about  
Amnesty International  
Book Club at  
[amnestybookclub.ca](http://amnestybookclub.ca)  
1-800-266-3789

YOU'RE INVITED!

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL  
BOOK CLUB



## Amnesty Book Club

If you are interested in reading good Canadian books, participating in discussions with other readers, and then taking action to help other people, join Amnesty International's Book Club! It combines awareness with action. Every month or two, a guest reader recommends a book about the human experience – either fiction or non-fiction.

Upon joining, you will receive the current month's book recommendation, a guide that includes discussion questions and background information on the issue or country featured in the book and notification of next month's book. Our guest readers and chosen authors will help shape these discussion guides. You will also receive a current human rights case that you can act on. Sign up at [amnestybookclub.ca](http://amnestybookclub.ca)

## ***Activist* magazine: our newsletter for Amnesty supporters who want to get more involved**

Published in print three times a year, and electronically once, each issue of *Activist* features news, action appeals, success stories, in-depth articles and information about Amnesty's campaigns. *Activist* is available to all Amnesty supporters who request it and have made a donation within the past year.

### **How can I receive *Activist* magazine?**

Email [members@amnesty.ca](mailto:members@amnesty.ca) or call **1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)** and we'll add you to the mailing list.

## **Volunteering at an Amnesty office in Ottawa, Toronto or Vancouver**

Volunteers help out in Amnesty International's offices in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver.

Volunteering at an Amnesty office is very rewarding and does not require a huge time commitment. Volunteering with Amnesty is a great way to meet others who want to make a difference. For the most part, the jobs tend to be of a general administrative or clerical nature.

### **How can I find out more?**

For volunteer opportunities at Amnesty's National Office in Ottawa, please e-mail **[volunteers@amnesty.ca](mailto:volunteers@amnesty.ca)**.

For opportunities in the Toronto office, contact **[toronto@amnesty.ca](mailto:toronto@amnesty.ca)**.

For opportunities in the Vancouver office, contact **[vancouver@amnesty.ca](mailto:vancouver@amnesty.ca)**.

Up-to-date information can be found online at **[amnesty.ca/jobs](http://amnesty.ca/jobs)**.

## Amnesty's Specialist Networks let you put your interests and skills to work

Here are some of the networks and other activism opportunities for those interested in specific human rights issues:

- The **Action Network for Women's Human Rights** is made up of women and men who want to put an end to grave human rights violations against women.
- Amnesty International's **Health Network** provides an opportunity for health care workers to protect and promote human rights.
- The **Death Penalty Abolition Network** is made up of Amnesty activists with a particular interest in taking action for the abolition of the death penalty.
- Volunteers join **Business and Human Rights** groups in Vancouver, Toronto and Calgary and work on the issue of corporate responsibility.
- **LGBTI Group**. All over the world, lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are being criminalized, tortured or ill-treated because of their sexuality. Amnesty's Toronto LGBTI Group focuses primarily on these human rights issues.

### How can I find out more?

You can let us know of your interest in any of these networks by emailing us at [members@amnesty.ca](mailto:members@amnesty.ca).

# Public engagement: involving your community in defending human rights

Whether you belong to an Amnesty community group, Action Circle, or Youth Group, or just want to get more people involved in defending human rights, the Activism Guide is for you. It is an excellent guide to current and upcoming public actions and activities.



Every issue features articles on campaign priorities and what you can do – ranging from letter-writing to visiting your Member of Parliament, to taking an issue to the street. We offer advice and links to resources so you can take part at community events. We also encourage you to organize your own events to draw public attention to important human rights issues. Film screenings, art exhibitions, panel discussions, and vigils are all ways of helping the public understand and take action on human rights.

## How can I find out more?

The current Activism Guide is posted here:  
[amnesty.ca/activism-guide](http://amnesty.ca/activism-guide).

# Annual General Meetings

Amnesty International holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year, usually in May or June. AGMs alternate between small meetings and large meetings. Small meetings are held every two years in Ottawa and feature an online webinar. In alternate years, larger meetings are held. The larger meetings are inspirational, fun, productive and re-energizing. Larger AGMs have been held in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Kelowna, Halifax, Toronto and Montreal.

Larger AGMs bring between 100 and 400 Amnesty International members from across Canada and the world together for a weekend of workshops, distinguished speakers, discussion, debate and policy making.

Together Amnesty supporters can create extraordinary change. AGMs are a time to use our voices and stand alongside fellow Amnesty activists to shape the movement and human rights work all over the world.

AGMs are also opportunities to make new friends, learn all about Amnesty's work and the effects it's having—and to reaffirm our commitment to human rights work.

## Who can attend AGMs?

The AGMs are open to all members of Amnesty's Canadian branch (English-speaking). An orientation session is provided for people attending for the first time. There is a registration fee. They vary with each AGM but run around \$250. Limited subsidies are available each year through an application process.

For more information, please go to [amnesty.ca/events/agm](https://www.amnesty.ca/events/agm) or contact Sarah French at [sfrench@amnesty.ca](mailto:sfrench@amnesty.ca).

## **Volunteer leadership positions allow you to put your knowledge and experience to work for human rights**

Across Canada, Amnesty members in volunteer leadership positions are using their skills and experience to further the cause of human rights. Senior volunteer positions do require a commitment in time, but the rewards of such work are immensely satisfying. Below are a few examples of senior volunteer positions.

### **Amnesty International Fieldworkers**

Fieldworkers are trained Amnesty volunteers who are responsible for promoting human rights activism at the local level across Canada. Fieldworkers help and support individuals and Amnesty groups to carry out their human rights work. Acting as the public face of Amnesty, Fieldworkers respond to media requests, give public speeches on human rights and Amnesty, and maintain contacts with community officials and leaders. Interested in becoming a fieldworker? If you would like to join the fieldworker program, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact [\*\*volunteers@amnesty.ca\*\*](mailto:volunteers@amnesty.ca).

### **Be a Local Organizer**

As a Local Organizer your main responsibility is to reach out to others and encourage them to engage in human rights activism. This includes looking for opportunities to showcase Amnesty International in various community settings and following up with individuals in your area who have contacted you or an Amnesty office and expressed an interest in getting involved. Please contact [\*\*volunteers@amnesty.ca\*\*](mailto:volunteers@amnesty.ca).

### **Amnesty International Country Coordinators**

Country coordinators are specialist volunteers who monitor the political situation of a country and facilitate the work of researchers at the International Secretariat in London. They work closely with other Amnesty volunteers and staff. Ideal candidates have a combination of country expertise, relevant academic background and language abilities, and human rights activist experience. For more information, please contact [\*\*members@amnesty.ca\*\*](mailto:members@amnesty.ca).

## **Members of Amnesty International's Board of Directors**

Amnesty International's Board of Directors is made up of the following: President, Vice-president, Chair, Treasurer, and six directors. Amnesty members are elected to these volunteer positions using an online voting system around the time of Amnesty's Annual General Meeting.

## **Activism Team -- regional contacts across Canada**

Amnesty International has regional activism coordinators based in several parts of Canada. If you'd like to contact them directly to find out about the opportunities to get involved locally, please use the information below:

### **Greater Toronto Area and SW Ontario**

Elena Dumitru: [edumitru@amnesty.ca](mailto:edumitru@amnesty.ca) / 416-363-9933 x333

### **Northern and Eastern Ontario and Atlantic Provinces**

Ailish Morgan-Welden: [amorgan-welden@amnesty.ca](mailto:amorgan-welden@amnesty.ca)  
/ 613-744-7667 x244

### **National Youth Program and English-Speaking Quebec**

Shauna MacLean: [smaclean@amnesty.ca](mailto:smaclean@amnesty.ca) / 613-744-7667 x258

### **Western Canada and the Territories**

Ayendri Perera: [aperera@amnesty.ca](mailto:aperera@amnesty.ca) / 604-294-5160 x101

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Amnesty International is a worldwide voluntary, activist movement that works impartially to prevent violations of people's fundamental rights.

**Amnesty International Canada** (English speaking)

312 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, ON K1N 1H9

Phone: 613-744-7667 or 1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)

Fax: 613-746-2411

Email: [members@amnesty.ca](mailto:members@amnesty.ca)