



WRITE FOR RIGHTS

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



ACTIVISM GUIDE 2017





Write a Letter. Change a Life.



Thank you for joining **Write for Rights 2017!**

Every year on December 10th, Amnesty International celebrates Human Rights Day with the world's largest grassroots human rights event. Activists in more than 140 countries around the world come together to write letters calling for the protection and promotion of human rights.

Your hand-written letters, combined with millions from around the world, can change a life. Last year, we sent over 3.7 million messages from 200 countries. Write for Rights is the power of one multiplied many thousand times over to make a difference.

Hosting an event?
REGISTER NOW

www.writeathon.ca

Order your
FREE ACTION KIT

www.amnesty.ca/store



Step-by-Step Planning Guide

Before December 10th

1) The Basics

Human Rights Day is Sunday, December 10th 2017. Depending on your audience, choose a date, location, and event style that works for you. Write for Rights events come in all shapes and sizes. Check out the Activity Ideas section at the back of this guide for suggestions. Amnesty International can provide insurance coverage for venues where needed.

2) Register Your Event

Register your event at www.writeathon.ca right away. Additional details can always be added later. Once you register, your event will be added to a map of activities across the country and you can connect with others in your community.

3) Invite Participants

Connect with potential letter writers in your community. Create fliers, posters, and social media events. Promote your event using the hashtag **#write4rights**.

4) Order Materials

Order your free Action Kit as soon as possible to receive buttons, stickers, promotional materials, and more. Make sure you have lots of paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps on hand.

5) Download Cases

Write for Rights actions will be posted throughout November as they are finalized. Everything will be available at www.writeathon.ca by December 1st.

At the Event

6) Be Welcoming!

Put up signs encouraging people to join your event. Create a welcoming atmosphere, greet everyone, and provide instructions, especially for first-time letter writers. Include snacks, music, videos and more. Set-up an area for children to create their own messages using our children's cases available at www.writeathon.ca.

7) Build Momentum

Create excitement by including a people counter or a letter counter at your event. Build momentum on social media by using the hashtag **#writeforrights**. **Learn more in the Social Media section at the back of this guide.**

8) Support Amnesty

Remind participants that there are many more cases to work on throughout the year. Amnesty needs support to continue our work beyond this event. Consider including Amnesty brochures or a donation jar.

9) Stay Connected: Thank participants for making a difference on Human Rights Day. Use the sign-up sheets in the Action Kit and return them to Amnesty International. We will thank everyone and keep them updated on the cases they worked on.

Have a Question?

We're Here to Help!

Contact us at writeathon@amnesty.ca

2017 Cases: Special Update!



The province of British Columbia has plunged ahead with the construction of the massive Site C dam without regard for the devastating impacts on the lives of First Nations women and men in the Peace River Valley or the violation of their Treaty rights. A new provincial government has ordered an independent review of economic rationale for the project. There's more hope than ever that this project can finally be stopped. If so, this will become a crucial moment to ensure that decision-making processes around resource developments are reformed to ensure that similar mistakes are not repeated. Last year, the struggle to protect the Peace River Valley was one of the featured cases in the global letter-writing marathon. Tens of thousands of messages of solidarity poured in from around the world. Now, more than ever, it's crucial that we keep up the pressure. It's a matter of justice.

#WeDefend

Human rights defenders are brave people who stand up for justice in sometimes extraordinary circumstances. But they are under attack.

Around the world, people who take a stand for human rights are being undermined by smear campaigns, government surveillance, unjust imprisonment and forced disappearance. Many have even been killed. Sadly, the situation is only getting worse.

This spring, Amnesty International launched a global campaign to defend the defenders. All of the cases in this year's Write for Rights are human rights defenders who are at risk around the world.

Learn more about the human rights defenders who we will write for on the next page.

Learn more about the global campaign by visiting www.amnesty.ca/wedefend

2017 Cases: Who Will We Help?



Xulhaz Mannan was the editor of Bangladesh's first LGBTIQ magazine until he and his friend were stabbed and killed in his home. Including his case in Write for Rights will highlight an unconscionable series of horrific murders of bloggers and academics in the country.

Online activist **Tadjadine Mahamat Babouri** has been tortured in Chad for posting videos on Facebook in which he was critical of government policies. The health of the prisoner of conscience is deteriorating in custody.

Chinese activist **Ni Yulan** defends people who have been forcibly evicted from their homes by housing developers. In response to her activism, authorities demolished her own home shortly before the Olympic Games in Beijing and have evicted her and her family from their homes multiple times. She has also endured surveillance, harassment and beatings that now confine her to a wheelchair.

The disappearance of her husband spurred **Hanan Badr el-Din** to become a human rights defender in Egypt. She founded an association called Families of the Forcibly Disappeared and worked to end enforced disappearances until her arrest on questionable charges in May 2017. She was to have been released after 15 days but she remains in custody.

The **Istanbul 10** include Amnesty Turkey's Director Idil Eser and Chair Taner Kiliç. The fabricated reasons for their arrests hinge on unfounded allegations of association with a terrorist organization. In abusing its power, the Turkish government is deliberately making the country a dangerous place for people who speak out for human rights.

Sakris Kupila is a 21-year-old medical student, and youth activist who defends transgender rights in Finland. He is being denied legal gender recognition and is at constant risk of intimidation, violent beatings and open hostility for his work as an advocate for the rights of trans people.

Members of **MILPAH** have received threats and even attacks for defending the territory and rights of the Lenca Indigenous People in Honduras. One of their campaigns sought to stop the construction of several hydroelectric plants.

Participating in a peaceful protest march against Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories was sufficient for the authorities to lay charges against **Issa Amro** and **Farid al-Atrash**. The two men are not currently in detention but if a military court finds them guilty, they could face a prison term. Amnesty International believes the charges against the two Palestinian human rights defenders are unfounded.

Jamaican police murdered **Shackelia Jackson's** brother. That event prompted her to begin a campaign to end police violence. This case will highlight the need for accountability from officers for their actions and call for Shackelia to be protected from intimidation and attack as she seeks justice.

Clovio Razafimalala is an environmental activist in Madagascar. Authorities have used false charges and detention to silence his efforts to stop the illegal trafficking of rosewood and other timber. Although he is currently free, he could be imprisoned again if he remains as vocal as he was in the past.

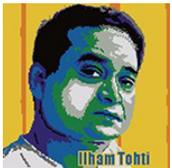


2016 Cases: Who Did We Help?

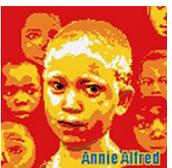
Around the world, supporters of Amnesty International took an astounding 4,660,774 actions to uphold human rights.



In Azerbaijan: Bayram Mammadov and Giyas Ibrahimov dared to criticize the state in a very public way—by painting a defiant message on a statue of the former president. Within hours, they were jailed on fabricated charges. Both young men were beaten into confessing to carrying heroin. They faced a maximum 12 years in prison. Write for Rights elevated their status as activists but unfortunately, both were sentenced to 10 years.



In China: Ilham Tohti was jailed for life. The respected university professor worked tirelessly to build bridges between ethnic communities in China. Ironically he is imprisoned on the charges of stirring up ethnic hatred. Ilham Tohti remains detained.



In Malawi: Annie Alfred was born with albinism. Some people believe her body has magic powers, so she and others like her risk being hunted and killed. Since Write for Rights began, the government has launched a handbook to better help investigators deal with offenses committed against people with albinism. A government agency has also begun buying sunscreen for distribution through medical institutions.



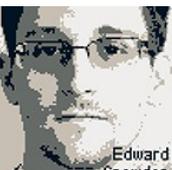
In Peru: Máxima Acuña was in a legal battle over her land with one of the world's largest gold and copper mines. On April 12, the Supreme Court of Justice acquitted her of charges. The Minister of Justice has been receptive to taking action to protect Máxima and her family. Write for Rights has helped to sensitize national media and public opinion about Máxima's safety and brought greater visibility to the land rights issue.



In Egypt: Shawkan photographed the crackdown in Cairo in August 2013 in which 1,000 were killed. For this he was arrested, tortured and jailed. A court has accepted his lawyer's request for a medical exam, something that might not have happened without the high level of activism on his case. However, Shawkan remains detained.



In Cameroon: Fomusoh Ivo Feh was jailed for 10 years for sharing a text message that he thought was amusing. His trial continues. Meanwhile, the authorities shut down an Amnesty International press conference in May 2017 at which we intended to present the 310,000 messages for Ivo's release.



In USA: The global debate about security issues sparked by Edward Snowden was amplified by Write for Rights and put of stamp of legitimacy on him as a whistleblower. Edward Snowden still lives in exile but he did appreciate the support, writing "there is no honour greater than standing shoulder-to-shoulder with your generous spirit."



In Canada: Construction on the dam in British Columbia's Peace River Valley continues since a Federal Court of Appeal rejected efforts to halt it. The inclusion in Write for Rights strengthened partnerships with Indigenous People's organizations, faith groups, and environmentalists. The case is included again this year.

Social Media Guide

Social media is a powerful tool to take action for human rights!

Make sure you use the hashtag #writeforrights in all of your posts.

Learn more at www.writeathon.ca/social.

PROMOTE WRITE FOR RIGHTS:

- Let everyone know that you Write for Rights by sharing a selfie wearing our “I Write for Rights” sticker!
- Help us build momentum by sharing our Write for Rights videos and photos and taking part in the solidarity actions for each case.
- Promote your own event on social media by creating a Facebook event and sharing messages over social media in the days and weeks leading up to your event.



AT YOUR EVENT:

- Designate a social media person who will be responsible for taking photos and posting to social media.
- Show your participants in action! Take pictures throughout the event.
- Use the hashtag #writeforrights and tag Amnesty International Canada (@AmnestyNow on Twitter, @amnestycanada on Facebook and Instagram). Make sure your participants know how to do the same by posting signs with our social media information.
- Look out on www.writeathon.ca for information on how to join our social media party on December 10th!

GET YOUR SWAG:

- Order your own “I Write for Rights” sticker in our online shop at www.amnesty.ca/store.
- Check out our other Write for Rights materials, including buttons, balloons, and t-shirts.
- Become a Human Rights Hero by ordering your own Write for Rights Cape!



Activity Ideas

You can Write for Rights anywhere!

At home, in your community, at work or at school. Make a party out of it—order food, invite some friends, and get writing! If you're feeling competitive, start up a Write for Rights Challenge. Here are some ideas to get you started...

AT HOME: Throw a party or a potluck. Choose food inspired by a country you're working on and show a film to encourage letter writers.

AT WORK: Set-up a hub in your break room and provide tasty snacks!

AT SCHOOL: Offer letter-writing as a study break in the library or set-up a booth with creative solidarity actions. Order pizza and offer it in exchange for letters.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY: Gather friends in pubs and cafés or set-up in bookstores, libraries, and shopping malls. Offer hot chocolate and letter-writing at bus stations or skating rinks. Connect with local artists and influencers to contribute to your event.

IN YOUR SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY: Make an announcement about Human Rights Day and organize an event after a service. Provide community members with a “candle of hope” - a simple white candle wrapped with a ready-to-sign appeal.



Whatever you do, tell us about it!

Share your photos and report at www.writeathon.ca or with [@AmnestyNow](https://twitter.com/AmnestyNow) on Twitter.