

How to write a letter

Sending messages to a government authority can be daunting. Just be polite, no matter how upset you are about the human rights issue you are addressing. Use the tips below to make your message as effective as you can.

Your letter should

- be respectful so as to encourage action
- be brief so as to encourage reading in full
- use short sentences and straightforward grammar especially to non-English-speaking countries. Translators will appreciate it.
- highlight the person(s) about whom you are concerned (use bold, underlining, uppercase letters or a highlighter pen)
- be personal to make your appeal unique.

Here is a suggested outline:

First sentence: **Describe who you are.** This makes your appeal different from others.

Second sentence: **Write about one thing that concerns you.** Other writers will cover other points.

Third sentence: **Ask the authority to do one thing.** Ask for a reply if you like.

Include as complete an address as is comfortable. This makes it more personal but also adds integrity to your request.

To mail, fax or email? That is the question. Do what is easiest for you. We want messages to arrive in all forms and at different times. If you choose email, it is especially important to make it individual and add your address or location since email can be so impersonal.

Contact urgentaction@amnesty.ca for questions about letter writing any time.