

WRITE FOR

RIGHTS 2025

ORGANISING

AN EVENT

Activist Toolkit

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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INTRODUCTION

Write for Rights **EVENTS**

Our activists play a big role in running Write for Rights year after year. From letter-writing events to bake sales, our local groups and supporters have consistently placed Write for Rights at the forefront of their campaigning since the beginning.

Thanks to this dedication, it has grown into the world's largest letter-writing campaign and activism event, with tens of thousands of people taking action each year.

This guide is designed to support anyone wanting to get involved in Write for Rights this year. Whether you're joining in for the first time or you're a seasoned campaigner, this toolkit offers ideas, inspiration and practical guidance to help you run a successful and impactful campaign.

We want to hear from you

If you've organised an event or done something creative and impactful in the past, please tell us about it so we can share it with the movement to inspire others. Whatever you do, please tell us about it via the feedback form at amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights. Also let us know if you find this toolkit useful: email us at activism@amnesty.org.uk or contact your community organiser.



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'Your timely actions – these letters, petitions, signatures, and the huge number of letters that went to the court, that went to the prosecutor's office – it was all very powerful.'

Rita Karasartova from Kyrgyzstan

In October 2023, human rights defender Rita Karasartova was arrested for publicly opposing a new border agreement and charged with attempting to 'violently overthrow the government'. Over 400,000 actions were taken for Rita during Write for Rights 2023 and in June 2024, she was acquitted.

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

AND ACTIVITIES

For starters, define what your event might look like and what you're hoping to achieve. This will help to determine the venue, date and how many people you need to make it happen.

1

Choose an event to host

Here are some suggestions:

- Hold a Write for Rights letter-writing meeting aimed at members and local Amnesty supporters.
- Run a group stall in your market or shopping centre.
- Ask your local faith group, church, mosque, synagogue or temple to put up an exhibition or display or to send a Write for Rights action to their congregation.
- Host a large-scale public event such as a concert or comedy night to introduce new people to Write for Rights, Amnesty and human rights issues.
- Organise a Write for Rights-themed AmnesTea. For a 'How to' guide, go to amnesty.org.uk/tea
- Run an event linked to the issue or activities that characterises a case your group is supporting.

2

Pick your venue

When deciding on your venue, consider the next steps for booking it:

- Is it suitable for your event's needs? For example, does it have IT facilities, display backboards and power?
- How accessible is it? What are the options for ramps, lifts, toilets, seating and tables?
- Does the venue offer facilities such as a catering space or can you bring your own food?
- Does it have restrictions on numbers?

What else do you need? A cover for your market stall, for example. If you're running a Write for Rights disco or live music Jamnesty, read our in-depth How to Plan a Jamnesty guide at amnesty.org.uk/files/student_fundraising_guide_how_to_plan_a_jamnesty_event.pdf

3

Who to invite?

Is your event designed for existing Amnesty supporters or do you want as many people as possible to come along? Write for Rights is a popular campaign proven to inspire more and more people every year. See how to approach new people on page 4. Think about the number of guests and send out invitations. Start assigning roles to people delivering the event and build a rota.

4

Read the resources

This guide comes with resources but you can go to the Write for Rights resources page at amnesty.org.uk/write to order or download posters and images, address labels for individuals or appeal targets, updates on cases and more. Alternatively, email us at activism@amnesty.org.uk

5

Be safe, inclusive and responsible

- Make sure you run your event safely. For a copy of Amnesty UK's Public Liability Insurance certificate, email sct@amnesty.org.uk
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify hazards and mitigating measures ahead of your event. If you have any questions about this, contact activism@amnesty.org.uk
- Is your event accessible and welcoming for all people and cultures? Consider the location, advertising and invitation list.
- Read our safeguarding policies at amnesty.org.uk/issues/safeguarding



WHAT'S NEXT?

What you need to consider now depends on your chosen event. Here are a few ideas you may find useful:

Does your event have a theme beyond Write for Rights?

For example:

- Folk music battle of the bands
- Christmas dinner party
- End-of-year school assembly
- Society social at your university

Do you need decorations?

Write for Right resources include booklets and posters, but can you think of anything else to make your event, stall or display stand out?

Do you need a sound system?

Check this out for music events, if you've invited a speaker or just for background music.

Will anyone be speaking (for example, a panel, Q&A or presentation)?

For extra information on this year's cases and our Individuals at Risk work, email the Supporter Care team: sct@amnesty.org.uk

What about food and catering?

If you're putting on a dinner or bake sale, think about what type of food and drinks you want to serve, as well as timings and venue restrictions.

How will you engage a new audience?

You could hold an event at work during lunchtime or ask people to sign action cards in your workplace, school, library or community club.

As Amnesty supporters know more than most, stopping human rights abuses and helping people in difficult situations is serious and vital work. But there is also joy in solidarity and your events can be engaging and fun. Write for Rights is a great time for activists to come together and celebrate human rights successes over the year, as well as their own campaigning work.

Who can you invite?

However big or small, your event will make an impact. But if you're keen to reach out to a wider audience than you've done before, consider this guest list:

- MPs and local councillors
- Local civic society groups. For example, the WI, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Scout and Guide groups, faith groups, parenting groups, and other charities and community groups.
- Group homes, for example for elderly people and adults with disabilities.
- People in your community who might be interested in the individuals, countries or issues in this year's campaign.

How to extend your reach

- Contact local media using the press release template on page 6. An interview, a plug on a radio show or an article can engage a broader audience.
- Spread the word about your Write for Rights event on social media, such as Facebook, using the hashtag #W4R25, or specific ones that link to individual cases (you'll find them in the main Write for Rights 2025 booklet).

It can be nerve-racking to ask people you don't know to come to an event. Read the Eden Project's excellent tips in *Beating invite anxiety – how to invite people to your event*. This guide is tailored to a Big Lunch, but the advice works for any community event.

Visit edenprojectcommunities.com/big-lunch-resources/how-to-invite-people-to-your-big-lunch

Or scan the QR code.



Community

If you're a seasoned Write for Rights action taker, this is the perfect year to go the extra mile and become a Write for Rights champion in your community.

If you're confident in running the campaign and know its ins and outs, why not take your activism further? For instance:

- Partner with your local church to host a Christmas concert and include Write for Rights.
- Speak to your community or host a discussion about the cases featured in the campaign.
- Organise a film screening on one of the campaign's issues such as protest rights, Indigenous land rights, or environmental justice.
- Run a creative action workshop – for example, making postcards or creating collaborative art inspired by one of the cases.

Looking for more information about a specific case or region? Contact the relevant country coordinator: amnesty.org.uk/country-coordinators

Build momentum

At your event, consider ways to extend the impact of the moment into the New Year and beyond.

Ask people to take a photo of their action and tag your local group on social media, showing others how they can get involved too.

Provide sign-up forms for your newsletter so you can keep in touch. Also offer Amnesty membership forms.

Invite any anyone who seems especially engaged to attend your next group meeting.

Fundraising at your event

Fundraise at your event to help cover your costs and raise funds for your group and Amnesty International UK.

Here are some suggestions – but feel free to get creative and try out your own ideas, too.

Quiz You'll need a venue, quizmaster and prizes (usually donated). Charge for entry. Between rounds, ask people to take action on a Write for Rights case.

Live music Busking sessions, open-mic nights, barn dances, day-long jazz concerts, inviting a choir or someone to play the guitar while people are writing – these have all worked for activists before. People are more inclined to donate if they are being treated to live performances.

AmnesTea Serve drinks and cakes in return for donations, and write cards together. Bake your own cakes or ask a local supermarket or bakery to donate them. See amnesty.org.uk/tea

Raffle Approach local businesses and supporters for prizes. Sell tickets at your event and hold the draw at the end. This will encourage people to stay, take action on cases and learn more about human rights.

Support and materials

Our Community and Events Fundraising team can talk through your plans, provide free resources and help promote your event to other Amnesty supporters in your area. We will add your event to our events listings amnesty.org.uk/events

For more information, visit amnesty.org.uk/organise-event or email sct@amnesty.org.uk

If you'd like more information about the cases or need advice on hosting a Write for Rights event, our volunteer country coordinators can also help you. These dedicated specialists have in-depth knowledge of the countries they cover and can offer valuable insights and support. Feel free to contact them at amnesty.org.uk/country-coordinators

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Tell your local press about Write for Rights and your event. You can find your local papers and radio stations email addresses on their website.

We have created a template press release for your group to fill out and send. See amnesty.org.uk/write

Include the below lines as appropriate for your group/activities:

Amnesty International [GROUP]

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

[Insert Date Of Release]

[TOWN/AREA NAME] RESIDENTS JOIN WORLD'S BIGGEST LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN TO HELP ELEVEN ACTIVISTS FACING DANGER

Amnesty International [group]'s Write for Rights campaign launches to support 11 individuals and organisations facing human rights abuses

[Town name] locals will join hundreds of thousands around the world sending letters, emails and texts to support people who have been jailed, attacked or disappeared. People across the UK can join to help 11 individuals and organisations facing abuses

Add details on any Write for Rights activities your group is organising. Include details about media opportunities at the event, including photo/interview opportunities

Amnesty International [group] has launched its flagship annual letter-writing campaign Write for Rights across [area], to support 11 activists and organisations around the world who have been attacked, jailed and harassed for standing up for their rights.

[Town] residents are invited to join the global action which takes place across November and December.

People around the world will send millions of cards, emails and tweets of solidarity to individuals or groups of people whose freedoms are being denied and will write letters putting pressure on those in power to stop the abuses being committed against them.

This year, Write for Rights – which is funded by players of the People's Postcode Lottery – will support 11 individuals and organisations who are suffering abuses, defending rights and demanding justice, including:

- **Abortion Support Network (ASN)** provides financial and practical support, including funding and accommodation, to help people travel to access safe abortion care. It assists people across Europe who face legal or financial barriers to reproductive healthcare. The UK-based volunteers often work alone and in their free time to provide this non-judgemental service.
- **Juan López**, a respected environmental and community leader in Tocoa, northern Honduras, dedicated his life to protecting rivers, forests, and campesino rights. He co-founded the Tocoa Municipal Committee for the Defence of Common and Public Goods working peacefully to defend land and environmental rights. In September 2023, he was assassinated. His family and colleagues continue to demand justice and accountability.

- Tunisian lawyer and media personality **Sonia Dahmani** defends marginalised communities, no matter the cost. Last year, police arrested her, and she has been detained in Manouba prison ever since. Sonia faces five prosecutions for speaking out against injustices such as racism and prison conditions, and is enduring cruel, inhumane conditions that threaten her health. Her arrest follows President Kais Saied's authoritarian power grab and growing repression of civil society.

[Option: The XXX Amnesty group is hosting its letter-writing event at [insert details]]

[Optional quote – amend and tweak as you wish]:

Amnesty International [group] spokesperson, [name] said: 'We hope that many [town name] residents take part in Amnesty International's *Write for Rights* campaign this year to make a difference to the lives of 11 individuals and organisations who are facing horrific abuses and urgently need support. Letters sent from [town] will make the noise about the injustices they face even louder and will have a huge impact.'

Sacha Deshmukh, chief executive of Amnesty International UK, said: 'By joining this campaign, people in the UK – and indeed around the world – can help improve their chances of getting justice. Sending a letter or email might seem like a small act, but when sent in their thousands they can change lives: those in power are forced to take notice.'

'Amnesty's Write for Rights campaign – which has been made possible with funding from the players of the People's Postcode Lottery – helps to protect the lives of persecuted people every year. We hope to see people across the country getting involved to make as much noise as possible about the injustices these human rights defenders are facing.'

Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign goes back to the very roots of the movement, which was founded in 1961, with Amnesty's early campaigners writing letters of support to those affected by human rights abuses, as well as letters of concern to governments around the world.

Successes from previous Write for Rights campaigns:

Ana da Silva Miguel, also known as Neth Nahara, was arrested in Luanda, Angola, on 13 August 2023 after criticising President João Lourenço on TikTok. She was sentenced to two years in prison and a fine for 'outrage against the state, its symbols and bodies'. She featured in Write for Rights 2024. On 25 December 2024, she was granted a presidential pardon and released on 1 January 2025.

Amnesty campaigned for Dorgelesse Nguessan during Write for Rights 2022. She was sentenced to five years in prison for attending her first peaceful protest about the state of the economy in 2020, leaving her family struggling. Thousands of people called for her freedom. Sustained campaigning led to Dorgelesse's release and she was reunited with her family in 2025.

In July 2023, Egyptian human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker was pardoned and released. Detained since 2019 for defending some of Egypt's most marginalised people, Mohamed was part of Write for Rights 2021. After his release, he said he would never forget how Amnesty and its supporters stood by him.

ENDS

For more information on Write for Rights 2025 and for pictures, illustrations and further detail on the cases please contact [NAME].

Media contact: Rachel Reilly; rachel.reilly@amnesty.org.uk; Ella Berny; ella.berny@amnesty.org.uk
Out of hours: 07721 398984 | www.amnesty.org.uk | Twitter: @NewsFromAmnesty

THEMATIC GUIDANCE

This year, we have chosen cases where **solidarity with their struggle is likely to make a strong impact. Your Write for Rights event can also highlight the wider issues and rights their stories represent, including freedom of expression and protest.**

TAKE ACTION Read more about each case in the Write for Rights campaign booklet or at amnesty.org.uk/write



Letter-writing, UK

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The right to freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is further protected by numerous international and regional treaties. Defending this right has always been central to Amnesty International's mission. It is vital for holding those in power to account and underpins other key freedoms, such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion. These cases highlight violations of this right, from media repression to persecution for speaking out.

Sonia Dahmani, Tunisia

A lawyer and media commentator, Sonia has been arbitrarily detained since May 2024 for peacefully expressing her opinions on racism, migration and prison conditions. She faces five prosecutions after criticising the government. Her case reflects a wider crackdown on free speech and dissent in Tunisia.



Makhabat Tazhibek-kyzy, Kyrgyzstan

A young journalist sentenced to six years in prison for reporting on corruption, Makhabat Tazhibek-kyzy is one of 11 independent voices targeted in 2024 who remains behind bars. Her story represents the growing repression of free speech and press freedom in Kyrgyzstan.



Sai Zaw Thaike, Myanmar

A photojournalist, Sai Zaw Thaike was imprisoned for reporting on the devastation caused by Cyclone Mocha. Arrested in 2023 and sentenced to 20 years by a military tribunal, his case reveals the extreme risks faced by journalists in Myanmar for simply reporting the truth.



ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND

CLIMATE JUSTICE

The climate crisis is a human rights emergency. It threatens access to water, food, health, housing and a clean environment, deepening existing inequalities and endangering the cultural survival of entire communities. Environmental defenders, particularly Indigenous activists, face harassment, imprisonment and violence for protecting their land and rights. These cases highlight the urgent need to protect environmental rights and those who defend them.

Mother Nature Cambodia, Cambodia

This youth-led group has courageously defended Cambodia's environment, including halting major projects such as a dam. In response, authorities have arrested and prosecuted members. In June 2024, six members were sentenced to six to eight years in prison for peaceful activism.



Ellinor Guttorm Utsi, Norway

Ellinor Guttorm Utsi is a Sámi activist defending Indigenous reindeer herding land from wind turbine development, which threatens Sámi culture and livelihoods. Despite a Supreme Court ruling declaring the turbines illegal, they still stand. Ellinor's case highlights the ongoing fight for environmental and cultural justice.



Guerreras por la Amazonía, Ecuador

This collective of young Indigenous activists are fighting to eliminate toxic gas flaring in the Ecuadorian Amazon causing environmental devastation in their communities. A 2021 ruling ordered the flares to be eliminated, yet they continue to burn. The group face threats, harassment and government inaction.



PROTECT THE PROTEST

Peaceful protest is a right and a powerful tool for demanding human rights, but expressing dissent is increasingly under attack. From state violence to legal intimidation, governments are silencing voices of ordinary people seeking change. Amnesty's campaign to protect the protest challenges these attacks, stands with those targeted and supports human rights causes.

Students' freedom of expression, USA

Across the USA, students have faced detention and deportation simply for exercising their right to protest. Many of them had spoken out against the genocide in Gaza and the US government's role in supporting the Israeli authorities' ongoing apartheid and illegal occupation against Palestinians.

Earlier this year, US immigration authorities wrongfully arrested and detained at least 10 students. All are known to have been targeted for using their right to protest.

These incidents are part of a wider, deeply troubling crackdown on student activism and dissent. This in turn is part of a broader erosion of civic space – a pattern we are also seeing echoed on campuses here in the UK.



Cafe event, Thailand

OUR ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

When you are working with rights holders

Amnesty International as an organisation has an ethical responsibility when working with people or acting on their behalf. Any action, project or campaign must be rooted in these six ethical principles:

- Dignity and agency
- Duty of care
- Non-exploitation
- Equity and non-discrimination
- Integrity and transparency
- Confidentiality

These principles apply to your own activities and events in support of campaigns, for example, when you organise events, liaise with speakers, represent Amnesty at meetings, actions and protests, and research and feature people in materials. Working ethically is something we constantly have to remind ourselves of. Keeping these principles in mind will ensure that the people we work with and for are safe and treated respectfully, and that we make decisions that are appropriate and create positive impacts.



Solidarity action, Zimbabwe

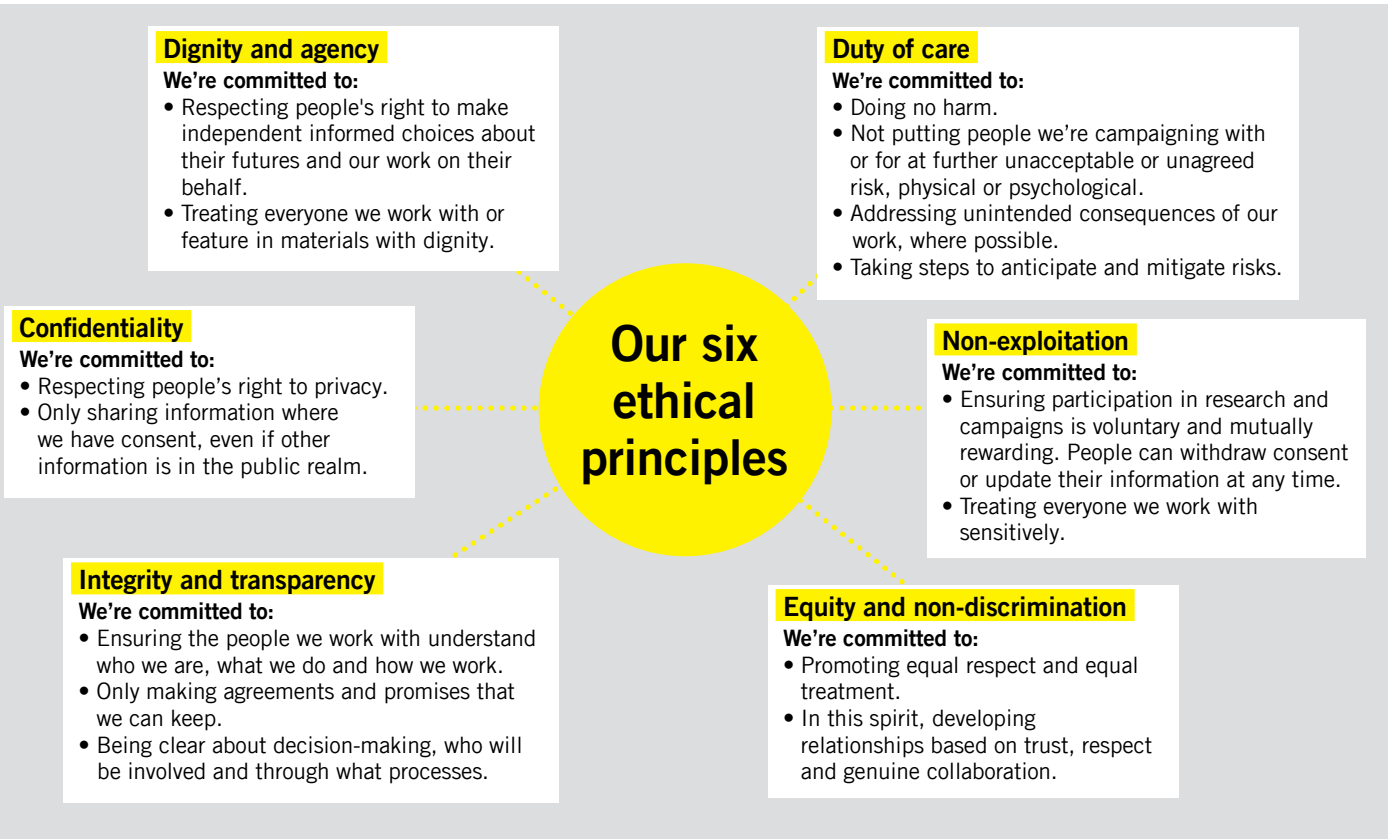
Why do we have ethical principles?

As activists with good intentions, it can be easy to assume that our campaign actions are ethical, that we are treating everyone with respect and protecting the dignity and safety of those we work for and with. Everything we do affects the fate and feelings of real people, whether this be campaigning or appeals.

However, due to the nature of our work, our best intentions can sometimes inadvertently lead to negative consequences. For example, when we’re under pressure to quickly produce materials that grab people’s attention or we’re trying to live up to the expectations of others involved. There are also limits to our own experience.

These principles are guidelines to help us work well as a global movement. They can be referred to as a checklist to identify moments when we should seek advice from colleagues, supporters, and the people we work alongside.

- These ethical principles are designed to reflect and embody Amnesty’s values as an organisation and outline how we should treat everyone – fairly, honestly and with dignity.
- They help ensure we’re acting responsibly and guide our work.
- They serve as a statement to the public, donors and rights holders that we take good practice and acting responsibly seriously.
- Having a set of principles enables local interpretation but ensures consistency across sections and the Amnesty movement.
- They are a requirement of Accountable Now (formerly known as INGO Accountability Charter) as part of responsible and transparent advocacy.



How to apply our ethical principles to your own work

Here are some examples to think about and why it’s important

Principle	Example	Guidance
Dignity and agency	Inviting a speaker to an event	Speak to the person beforehand. How do they want to be introduced and represented? What pronouns do they want to use? What part of their story do they want to be at the core of our messaging and communications?
Duty of care	Organising an event with a visiting human rights defender	Do not post their details or what they've said on social media without their consent. First assess the risks together, for example, reprisals when returning to their country for publicly criticising the authorities or associating with Amnesty. The same applies to developing content on an individual's case.
Non-exploitation	Writing a piece of communication to show how Amnesty has been effective in past campaigns	Do not include a case story from 10 years ago without checking if we still have consent to feature that person. Consent expires after two years – and can be withdrawn at any time. The information or the way it is appears may also have changed.
	Your group is building a new relationship	Undertake a cost-benefit analysis with that person so they understand how they can benefit from working with Amnesty – and what the potential risks are. Talk through the different ways we can support and promote their work. Be transparent about the benefits Amnesty may gain from the relationship beyond creating human rights change.
Equity and non-discrimination	Working with an individual	Equity means putting in place everything that is needed for a person to have an experience working with Amnesty equal to the one we have in working with them. This means ensuring equal power in an unequal dynamic. Create the space for them to say no, to suggest or implement ideas, and to advance or change the course of our work.
Integrity and transparency	Starting a new relationship	Be upfront about the limits of our expertise and abilities, and how and when decisions on work will be made, and include steps to ensure equitable participation. Record and share agreements. Don't say 'We'll stick with you till the end' because we can't promise that.
Confidentiality	Writing a press release or other materials	Only include information from Amnesty, not other sources, for example the web or media outlets. We do not know if the person has given consent for the information to be shared and for the way they are represented, or whether they are happy for Amnesty to use and act on the content.

If you have any questions or would like to talk through anything,
we can provide advice from community organisers and fundraisers.

Please contact activism@amnesty.org.uk
or fundraise@amnesty.org.uk

