

**MARINEL SUMOOK UBALDO,  
PHILIPPINES**

**WRITE  
FOR  
RIGHTS**

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



# CLIMATE CHANGE: MAKE A **DIFFERENCE** NOW



**LEARNING ABOUT  
OUR HUMAN RIGHTS  
ACTIVITIES**





## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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.

We investigate and expose the facts, whenever and wherever abuses happen. We lobby governments as well as other powerful groups such as companies, making sure they keep their promises and respect international law. By telling the powerful stories of the people we work with, we mobilize millions of supporters around the world to campaign for change and to stand in the defence of activists on the frontline. We support people to claim their rights through education and training.

Our work protects and empowers people – from abolishing the death penalty to advancing sexual and reproductive rights, and from combating discrimination to defending refugees' and migrants' rights. We help to bring torturers to justice. Change oppressive laws... And free people who have been jailed just for voicing their opinion. We speak out for anyone and everyone whose freedom or dignity are under threat.



*Amnesty International members protesting at the Turkish embassy in Paris, July 2017.*

© [www.christophemeireis.com](http://www.christophemeireis.com)



*Letter writing for W4R in Algeria.*

## WRITE FOR RIGHTS

Amnesty International's "Write for Rights" campaign takes place annually around 10 December, which is Human Rights Day (commemorating the day when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948). Write for Rights aims to bring about change to the lives of people or communities that have suffered or are at risk of human rights violations. Among the many actions that take place as part of Write for Rights, Amnesty raises individual cases with decision-makers who can change the situation, gives visibility to those cases by organizing protests and public actions, and brings international attention through media and internet exposure.

A major part of the Write for Rights campaign consists of a letter-writing marathon and involves millions of people around the globe. As a result of the international call to action, public officials are bombarded with letters. Victims of torture, prisoners of conscience, and people facing the death penalty

or other human rights violations receive messages of solidarity from thousands of people in far-off corners of the globe. Those suffering the violations know that their cases are being brought to public attention. They know that they are not forgotten.

The results of similar campaigns in previous years have been striking. Individuals affected by the violations report the difference that these letters make, they express their gratitude to those who have written, and they often describe the strength they derive from knowing that so many people are concerned about their case.

Often there is a noticeable change by officials towards these individuals: charges are dropped, treatment becomes less harsh, and laws or regulations addressing the problem are introduced.



## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

SUCCESS STORIES FROM  
THE 2018 CAMPAIGN

## ARRESTS IN BRAZIL

In March 2019, two ex-police officers were arrested for killing Marielle Franco, the charismatic local politician and defender of the poorest in Brazil. It was a small step towards justice. People worldwide wrote over half a million messages demanding: "Who killed Marielle Franco?"

**"It helps me to get up in the morning... knowing that there is this big global network of affection."**

*Monica Benicio, Marielle's partner*



© Elisângela Leite

DISABILITY RIGHTS  
WIN IN KYRGYZSTAN

Gulzar Duishenova had been championing disability rights in her country for years. In March 2019, her persistence paid off when Kyrgyzstan finally signed up to the Disability Rights Convention. Supporters wrote nearly a quarter of a million messages backing Gulzar.

**"I am grateful for all the support and solidarity from so many of Amnesty International's activists who care about our rights despite being from a different country."**



© Svetlana Zelenskaya/Amnesty International

VITAL HEALTH CARE  
RECEIVED IN IRAN

Jailed for handing out leaflets criticizing the death penalty, Atena Daemi has endured physical attacks while in prison. She needed specialist medical care urgently, and thanks to the more than 700,000 actions taken by people worldwide, Iran finally gave her the treatment she needed.

**"I am wholeheartedly grateful to all people around the world who have showered me with compassion and kindness and spared no effort in supporting me."**



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## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us. They are based on principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect – regardless of age, nationality, gender, race, beliefs and personal orientations.

Your rights are about being treated fairly and treating others fairly, and having the ability to make choices about your own life. These basic human rights are universal – they belong to all of us; everybody in the world. They are inalienable – they cannot be taken away from us. And they are indivisible and interdependent – they are all of equal importance and are interrelated.

Since the atrocities committed during World War II, international human rights instruments, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have provided a solid framework for national, regional and international legislation designed to improve lives around the world. Human rights can be seen as laws for governments. They create obligations for governments or state officials to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those within their jurisdiction and also abroad.

Human rights are not luxuries that can be met only when practicalities allow.



W4R activists in Togo.



## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

The UDHR was drawn up by the newly formed United Nations in the years immediately following World War II. Since 1948, it has formed the backbone of the international human rights system. Every country in the world has agreed that they are bound by the general principles expressed within the 30 articles of this document.

The UDHR itself is, as its name suggests, a declaration. It is a declaration of intent by every government around the world that they will abide by certain standards in the treatment of individual human beings. Human rights have become part of international law: since the adoption of the UDHR, numerous other binding laws and agreements have been drawn up on the basis of its principles. It is these laws and agreements which provide the basis for organizations like Amnesty International to call on governments to refrain from the type of behaviour or treatment that the people highlighted in our Write for Rights cases have experienced.



## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



### CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

Right to life, freedom from torture and slavery, right to non-discrimination.

Article 1 Freedom and equality in dignity and rights

Article 2 Non-discrimination

Article 3 Right to life, liberty and security of person

Article 4 Freedom from slavery

Article 5 Freedom from torture



### LEGAL RIGHTS

Right to be presumed innocent, right to a fair trial, right to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention.

Article 6 All are protected by the law

Article 7 All are equal before the law

Article 8 A remedy when rights have been violated

Article 9 No unjust detention, imprisonment or exile

Article 10 Right to a fair trial

Article 11 Innocent until proven guilty

Article 14 Right to go to another country and ask for protection



### SOCIAL RIGHTS

Right to education, to found and maintain a family, to recreation, to health care.

Article 12 Privacy and the right to home and family life

Article 13 Freedom to live and travel freely within state borders

Article 16 Right to marry and start a family

Article 24 Right to rest and leisure

Article 26 Right to education, including free primary education



### ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Right to property, to work, to housing, to a pension, to an adequate standard of living.

Article 15 Right to a nationality

Article 17 Right to own property and possessions

Article 22 Right to social security

Article 23 Right to work for a fair wage and to join a trade union

Article 25 Right to a standard of living adequate for your health and well-being



### POLITICAL RIGHTS

Right to participate in the government of the country, right to vote, right to peaceful assembly, freedoms of expression, belief and religion

Article 18 Freedom of belief (including religious belief)

Article 19 Freedom of expression and the right to spread information

Article 20 Freedom to join associations and meet with others in a peaceful way

Article 21 Right to take part in the government of your country



### CULTURAL RIGHTS, SOLIDARITY RIGHTS

Right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Article 27 Right to share in your community's cultural life

Article 28 Right to an international order where all these rights can be fully realized

Article 29 Responsibility to respect the rights of others

Article 30 No taking away any of these rights!



## ACTIVITY

# CLIMATE CHANGE: MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW

## KEY CONCEPTS

- Climate change
- Environmental rights and protection
- Youth activism
- Right to life, water, food, housing
- Economic, social and cultural rights

## ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Participants will learn about dignity and human rights for communities affected by devastating weather events caused by climate change. They will explore the relation between climate change and human rights from their perspective and be ready to support those people most affected by it.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants will understand how human rights, climate change and other environmental issues are closely connected.
- Participants will develop ideas on how they can take action to support people most affected by climate change, including Marinel Ubaldo
- Participants will be able to describe Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign, take action on climate change and support those people most affected by it

## PREPARATION AND RESOURCES

- Two signs at either end of the room saying: "Agree" and "Disagree". Make sure there is space for participants to position themselves along a line between the signs.
- Optional: copies of Marinel's letter to participants (separated into two parts)

## TIME NEEDED:

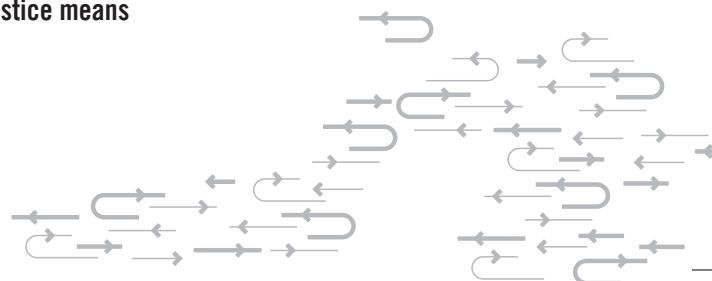
60 minutes

AGE: 12+

## INTRODUCTION:

## CLIMATE CHANGE? CLIMATE CRISIS?

1. Invite participants to spread out around the room. Introduce the activity by telling them that you will give them a theme to explore and that their task is to create a statue (a fixed position) to express their reaction. Encourage participants to use their entire body, including facial expressions.
  - Start with a couple of warm up statues to practice. Suggest any topic easy for the participants to engage in, for example "make a statue that shows what you will do this weekend" or "make a statue that represents your family". Allow the participants a few seconds to create their statues each time.
2. Prompt the participants to "make a statue that shows what climate change means to you". Ask half the participants to relax and take a look around while others remain in position, then ask the participants walking around to recreate their statue while the others walk around and observe. Following the same instructions, give the participants another prompt: "make a statue that shows what climate justice means to you". Again, allow participants to observe each other's poses.

 15 MINUTES




### 3. In plenary, debrief using the following questions:

- What sort of statues did we make? What emotions did you express?
- What do we know about climate change?
- How does climate change effect access to food, housing, work?
- Do you think there is a link between climate change and natural disasters?
- Which term best represents what is happening to the world – climate change or climate crisis? Why?

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

 15 MINUTES

4. Indicate the two signs “Agree” and “Disagree” to participants, and ask them to stand between them around the midpoint. Explain that you will read out a few statements and after each one, participants should silently move towards the sign which best represents their opinion.

Choose three or four of the following statements. After each statement, allow a little time for discussion and allow participants to move from their place if they change their mind.

- Climate change affects everyone equally
- Climate change is a human rights crisis
- Individual action is more important than government action in slowing global warming
- There is nothing more that governments and corporations can do to fight climate change
- Young people are responsible to find the solutions to the current climate crisis
- Climate change will affect my rights to housing, water and sanitation, food, health and other human rights.

Use the background information to support your discussion and/or read out the following quote, giving participants an opportunity to respond:

“Climate change is a human rights issue precisely because of the impact it is having on people. It compounds and magnifies existing inequalities, and it is children who will grow up to see its increasingly frightening effects. The fact that most governments have barely lifted a finger in response to our mutually assured destruction amounts to one of the greatest inter-generational human rights violations in history” (Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International).

## INTRODUCING MARINEL

 15 MINUTES

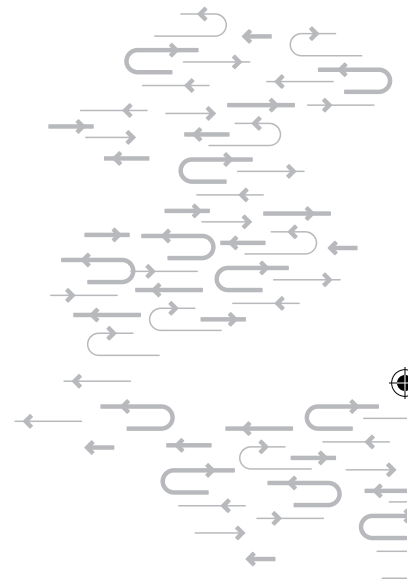
5. Explain that Marinel Sumook Ubaldo is 22 years old and from the Philippines. When she was 16 years old Typhoon Yolanda, one of the deadliest typhoons on record, destroyed her village in Eastern Samar and over 6,000 people died in the Philippines alone, while millions lost their homes. Marinel has written a letter directly to the participants. Read the letter aloud or hand it out for them to read alone or in small groups. More information on Marinel’s case can be found on page 11.

Ask the participants to discuss the following questions, in small groups and draw conclusions together:

- What do you think Marinel’s childhood was like?
- Do you think Marinel felt safe where she grew up? Why or why not?

“My name is Marinel Sumook Ubaldo. I am a daughter of a fisherman who has lived his whole life providing for his family. Life has never been easy for my father. He wasn’t able to finish grade school because he needed to go out to the sea in order to provide for his family. As a child who has experienced about 20 typhoons per year, calamities and disasters have become normal for me. [I know] that the sea could be cruel at times, that because of our geographic location, we are more vulnerable to so many types of climatic disasters.”

**Optional:**  
You could use this video available at <https://vimeo.com/146327850> to introduce Marinel.





- What do you think some of the similarities and differences are between your life and Marinel's?

Continue, with the second part of the Marinel's letter, either reading aloud or allowing participants time to read it themselves.

"Climate change is not anymore a battle that we will face in the future, but a battle that we need to face today, in the present.

If we are not afraid to speak up and share our story, then we will be able to tell the world how the Philippines has been suffering from the effects of a phenomenon that we didn't cause. Some of the countries that have historically contributed to climate change the most are still not fully feeling its effects and that's why it's so important for them to hear our stories so they can realize that it is affecting real people today.

As youth, we have the energy and the power to speak up and to represent those who do not have the courage to stand up for themselves.

Sharing has been the key to healing for me. Climate change is not just an issue of adaptation and mitigation, but also an issue of human rights. During climatic disasters, we are being deprived of the basic rights that we should be able to enjoy.

The future of all of us depends on YOUR decision NOW, so please join me and make a difference."

## TAKING ACTION

 15 MINUTES

6. Use the information on page 2 to give the participants some information about Write for Rights. Tell them that Amnesty International is calling on people around the world to write letters to support Marinel and her campaign.

- Ask participants to brainstorm and plan additional ways they can take action on climate change and support Marinel's fight for people affected most by it.

7. Give them a task for home, or allocate time in a future activity where participants can write letters to Marinel and their own government.

### Optional:

You could use the short course available at [academy.amnesty.org](http://academy.amnesty.org) to introduce the Write for Rights campaign.

## WRITE FOR RIGHTS INSTRUCTIONS

### WRITE A LETTER – SAVE A LIFE

1. Encourage participants to write to Marinel expressing their solidarity or any encouraging words to her. Ask them to think about what she might want to hear, what could give her the courage to continue her fight to support her community and protest against climate change.

**Marinel Ubaldo**

c/o Amnesty International, 6-C Perseveranda  
Townhomes II, Maningning Street  
Sikatuna Village, Quezon City  
1101 Philippines

2. Encourage them to write to their own government

Participants can use the template letters at [www.amnesty.org/writeforrights](http://www.amnesty.org/writeforrights), or you can give them the following guidelines to write a more personal letter:

3. Tell your leader something to make this a personal letter:

- Tell him/her something about yourself
- Tell him/her what shocks you about climate change
- Demand that he/she takes action ....

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Millions of people are already suffering from the catastrophic effects of extreme disasters exacerbated by climate change – from prolonged drought in sub-Saharan Africa to devastating tropical storms sweeping across Southeast Asia, Southern Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

In August 2018, young people started taking to the streets to hold governments and business accountable for the impacts. They have shown true leadership in demanding changes that require the participation and support of all sectors of society.

## WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

The planet's climate has constantly been changing over geological time, with significant fluctuations of global average temperatures.

However, this current period of warming has happened more rapidly than any past events. It has become clear that humanity has caused most of the last century's warming. We are doing this through burning fossil fuels, agriculture and land-use and other activities that drive climate change. This rapid rise is a problem because it's changing our climate at a rate that is too fast for living things to adapt to.

These rising temperatures lead to extreme weather events, rising sea levels, shifting wildlife populations and habitats, as well as other impacts. The effects of climate change are already being felt now, but they will get worse. Global warming has reached approximately 1°C above pre-industrial levels so far.

## WHY IS CLIMATE CHANGE A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE?

Climate change is causing devastation across the world, which makes it an urgent human rights issue. In particular,

- It will compound and magnify existing inequalities.
- It is likely to affect certain groups more than others – for example, those communities who depend on agricultural or coastal livelihoods, as well as other disadvantaged groups who are subject to discrimination, such as women, elderly people, children and youth, people living in poverty and indigenous communities.
- Its effects will continue to grow and worsen over time, creating ruin for current and future generations.

In addition to threatening our very existence, climate change is having harmful impacts on our rights to life, health, food, water, housing and livelihoods. Climate change directly effects these human rights and will continue to do so.



*Marinel Ubaldo, protesting against the climate crisis, in front of the "Wall Street Bull", New York, USA*

© Michael Nagle/Greenpeace



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Right to life	<p>Through extreme weather-related events, such as storms, floods and wildfires. Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines claimed the lives of more than 6,000 people in 2013.</p> <p>Heat stress is deadly: the 2003 summer heatwave in Europe resulted in the deaths of 35,000 people.</p>
Right to health –	<p>Major health impacts of climate change will include greater risk of injury, disease and death due to more intense heatwaves and fires.</p> <p>Increased risk of under-nutrition as a result of diminished food production in poor regions; and increased risks diseases.</p>
Right to housing –	<p>Extreme weather events like floods and wildfires are destroying people's homes, leaving them displaced.</p> <p>Drought, erosion and flooding can also over time change the environment while sea-level rises threaten the homes of millions of people around the world in low-lying territories.</p>
Rights to water and to sanitation –	<p>Melting snow and ice, reduced rainfall, higher temperatures and rising sea levels affect the quality and quantity of water resources.</p> <p>Extreme weather events and disasters affect water and sanitation infrastructures.</p> <p>Already more than one billion people do not have access to clean water, worsened by climate change.</p>

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR STOPPING CLIMATE CHANGE?

States and corporations are responsible for stopping climate change.

- **States** are obliged to take steps to tackle climate change as fast and and as humanely as possible. In their efforts to address climate change, they must not resort to measures that directly or indirectly violate human rights. For example, they shouldn't create conservation areas or renewable energy projects on the lands of Indigenous peoples without consulting them and getting their consent.
- **Businesses** must remedy human rights abuses they cause or to which they contribute, which extends to human rights harms resulting from climate change. Research shows that just 100 fossil fuel-producing companies are responsible for 71% of global greenhouse gas emissions since 1988.

# MARINEL SUMOOK UBALDO

## PHILIPPINES

Marinel Sumook Ubaldo was 16 when she knew she had to find a way to protect herself and her community from the disastrous effects of climate change. On 13 November 2013, she survived Typhoon Yolanda – one of the deadliest typhoons on record. It destroyed her village in Samar: over 6,000 people died in the Philippines alone and millions lost their homes.

Six years later, Marinel got her degree in social work. A nature lover and well-known youth activist, she spends her spare time campaigning for her community's rights.

In September 2018, she went to New York City to give evidence to an investigation into climate change and the way fossil fuel industries contribute to it. "I'm not just... a climate statistic," she told a packed assembly hall. "My story is only one of many, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the vulnerable and the marginalized communities – may our voices be heard."

Marinel, her family and thousands of others who lost their homes in the typhoon need enough food, water, housing, electricity and toilets. The Philippine government has not done enough and has left them to live in unhealthy conditions where it is hard to earn a livelihood.

But Marinel remains dedicated to ensuring governments around the world confront climate change and tackle its effects on her community, and others like them. Support her.

**Demand support for climate change survivors.**



© Lawrence Rui (CC)



**Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.**

**Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.**

**We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.**

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