

Amnesty International UK

# Annual Review 2019



AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



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# COUNTERING DESPAIR WITH HOPE

**‘No one is safe unless we are all safe’**

## A message from Kate Allen

The world became a different place in 2020. After the terrifying threat of Covid-19 became apparent, events moved fast. Many of us know someone who has died or fallen ill. Our activists and supporters, staff members and volunteers have been directly affected. My thoughts are with you all at this painful and difficult time.

The pandemic has changed how we work. It has forced us to cancel, postpone or re-invent campaigning events and fundraising activities. We have re-focused our plans and resources on the most urgent human rights issues facing us today.

The impact of the pandemic will not disappear when the virus is brought under control. Gross injustices and inequalities at home and around the world will stand out starker than ever, as the Black Lives Matter movement has underlined. There will be great changes but, if enough of us so choose, they could lead to a better, fairer world. Amnesty International is looking and planning ahead for just that. We must ensure governments protect vulnerable people during and after the pandemic: no one is safe unless we are all safe. This review shows how your generous support helped Amnesty International to stand up for human rights in 2019, here in the UK and across the world.

In 2019, our researchers exposed extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and war crimes in Sudan. Our work prompted countries to suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia and forced the US-led military coalition to admit responsibility, for the first time, for the deaths of more than 180 civilians in Syria. We stood up for refugees and asylum seekers, campaigned for action on the climate crisis, helped to secure the release of prisoners of conscience, and much more.

The year ended with more than 6.6 million appeals and solidarity messages being sent during our global annual Write for Rights campaign. It was a powerful reminder that



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Amnesty International has always countered despair with hope, helplessness with action, selfishness with solidarity, and fear with determination. With your support, we will continue to do so throughout this crisis and beyond.

Thank you so much for your support for Amnesty International and for helping stand up for the human rights we should all enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Allen'.

**Kate Allen**  
**Director, Amnesty International UK**

# A YEAR IN HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2019 Amnesty International helped to legalise same-sex marriage, free prisoners of conscience, halt executions, promote the rights of people with disabilities, challenge online censorship, call for action on the climate crisis, and much more. Here are just a few of our success stories.

## LGBTI rights

In a historic moment for equality in the UK, equal marriage was legalised in Northern Ireland in October 2019 (more on page 6). Earlier in the year Taiwan became the first country in Asia to allow same-sex couples to wed.

## Prisoners of conscience freed

In Myanmar journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, convicted of breaching the Official Secrets Act for investigating a military massacre, walked free in May 2019 following a presidential amnesty. Former child soldier Aung Ko Htwe also received an early release in September.

In Azerbaijan pro-democracy activists Bayram Mammadov and Gias Ibrahimov, jailed for a graffiti protest, were released in an amnesty in March 2019. Egyptian photojournalist Shawkan (below) left prison the same month, after five and a half years behind bars on trumped-up charges. And Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan, arrived safely in Canada in May, after being released in late 2018.



© Ali Jarrar/AI

## Defending human rights defenders

In a victory for media freedom in Northern Ireland, the police dropped a criminal investigation into journalists Trevor and Barry McCaffrey, and a warrant authorising raids on their homes was quashed. US geography professor Scott Warren (above), who faced up to 10 years in jail for providing humanitarian assistance to people crossing into the US from Mexico, was acquitted of all charges. And in February 2019 the Stansted 15, who were tried in relation to their attempt to stop the deportation of 60 people from the UK, were spared jail and received suspended sentences (more on page 7).

**'We were lifted up by your solidarity during what was the biggest challenge of our lives. People power gets results.'**

**Mel Strickland, Stansted 15**

## Execution halted

In November 2019 a US appeal court halted the execution of Rodney Reed, who has been on death row since 1998, and ordered the original trial court to consider new evidence in his case. The ruling followed a global outcry from Amnesty International supporters and others.

## Disability rights

In Kyrgyzstan the government ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in March 2019: this was a key goal of our campaign supporting Kyrgyz activist Gulzar Duishenova (below).

**‘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.’**

**Gulzar Duishenova**



## Uncensored

A senior Google executive announced in July 2019 that the company had dropped plans to launch Project Dragonfly, a censored search engine for China. The move followed Amnesty International protests outside Google’s offices in the UK, the US, Canada and Hong Kong. More than 15,000 people signed our petition demanding the company to scrap Project Dragonfly. Alongside 60 other NGOs, we also wrote an open letter urging CEO Sundar Pichai to take action.



## Battling climate crisis

Amnesty International supporters around the world joined the youth-led global climate strike, which saw more than 7.6 million people in 185 countries take to the streets. Amnesty International also teamed up with the UN, Greenpeace and others to stage the first ever global summit on the climate crisis and human rights. More on page 17.



## Football Welcomes

In April 2019 a record **177 clubs** – including Premier League and Women’s Super League teams – took part in our annual **Football Welcomes** weekend, which celebrates the contribution refugees make to the beautiful game and their local communities (more on page 9).

## Justice for war crimes

In July 2019, the International Criminal Court convicted Bosco Ntaganda, who led a faction of the M23 armed group in the Democratic Republic of Congo, of 18 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He was later sentenced to 30 years in prison. Amnesty International documented numerous human rights abuses by M23 fighters under Ntaganda, including unlawful killings, forced recruitment of children, and rape.

# STANDING UP FOR INDIVIDUALS

Taking action for people whose rights are being abused and offering them solidarity is central to the purpose of Amnesty International.

The principle of the many standing up for the few has always been at the heart of our defence of human rights. We mobilise hundreds of thousands of people around the world using two basic approaches:

- **Urgent Action** protects people who are at imminent risk of serious abuse.
- **Long-term casework** aims to create lasting change.

With both approaches, our supporters send appeals to governments, officials and others in positions of authority by post, email, text message and social media.

## Urgent Actions

When someone is at imminent risk of execution, torture or another serious human rights violation, we inform the tens of thousands of members of our global Urgent Action Network, who quickly send letters, emails and other appeals to the relevant authority. In 2019 UK members of the Urgent Action Network took action on behalf of people who were unjustly detained, required medical treatment or legal advice, or faced torture and ill treatment.

For example, the network went into action when Moroccan journalist Hajar Raissouni was imprisoned on trumped-up charges of abortion and extra-marital sex in September 2019. Hajar and her fiancé were sentenced to one year in prison, and her doctor to two years. On 16 October 2019, all three were released by royal pardon.

## Long-term casework

Our supporters in the UK took action on dozens of long-term cases in 2019, opposing torture, unfair trials, arbitrary detention, the death penalty, forced psychiatric treatment, and the threatened destruction of indigenous peoples.

Among these cases was that of Ahmed H, a Syrian man unjustly detained for four years in Hungary after leaving his long-term home in Cyprus to help his elderly parents flee the Syrian conflict. Thousands of our supporters called for Ahmed H's release and in October he was finally allowed to return to his family in Cyprus.

More than **6.6 million appeals and messages** were sent during Write for Rights 2019.

## Write for Rights

Write for Rights is the world's biggest letter-writing campaign. Our supporters across the globe send millions of cards, letters, emails, tweets, Facebook and Instagram posts, and other messages of support to people whose rights have been abused, alongside appeals to the relevant authorities.

For a teenager on death row, an activist fighting to save a community hit by climate change or a student held in a political 're-education' camp, these messages of solidarity are powerful reminders that they are not alone. Our 2019 campaign focused on young people demanding justice for themselves or for others.

**'Write for Rights made a huge difference to the way I see my activism.... It made me believe in myself and in what I am fighting for. I have gained confidence and trust in myself because of people who showed me that my story and the story of my community is important in telling people how real climate change is.'**

**Marinel Ubaldo**, typhoon survivor and climate activist from the Philippines, campaigns for governments around the world to address climate change and tackle its effects on communities like her own. More than half a million people took action to support her during Write for Rights 2019.



© Eloisa Lopez/Al

# DEFENDING THE DEFENDERS

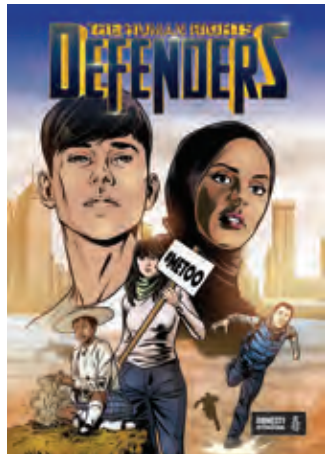
Standing up for human rights is a dangerous activity: globally, at least 304 human rights defenders were killed in 2019. But despite the risks, teachers, students, lawyers, journalists, Indigenous communities, LGBTI groups, factory workers and many others continue to protect and promote human rights around the world. Amnesty International stands beside them.

## The Human Rights Defenders campaign

Inspired by Marvel and DC comics, we launched our own version of a superhero collective – the Human Rights Defenders – in March 2019. Based on real-life activists, the five characters helped us to share the message that human rights defenders are the true superheroes. We produced a comic book, a movie trailer with a voiceover by actor, activist and writer Gillian Anderson, and posters quoting actors Patrick Stewart and Paul Bettany. As a result, more than 10,000 people in the UK wrote to their MPs asking them to call for greater protection of human rights defenders. Within months the UK government published a new set of guidelines for British embassies on how to support people who stand up for human rights.

‘I believe it’s our duty to defend those who defend human rights. Who will protect our rights, if they don’t? And who will protect them if we don’t call on our governments to make the protection of human rights defenders a priority.’

Gillian Anderson



## Protective Fellowship Scheme

We also worked with York University on its Protective Fellowship Scheme, under which up to 10 human rights defenders are given the opportunity to develop their skills, recuperate and receive support. In Scotland, we worked with a similar scheme at Dundee University. We supported two defenders from Zambia and Russia in speaking to ministers and civil servants about human rights in their countries, and in lobbying the Scottish Government about support for human rights defenders globally.



© Carmen Valino

## Rise Up

Launched in 2019 with support from the Co-operative Bank, our new Rise Up programme is designed to boost the skills and experience of the next generation of human rights defenders. In the first year, 19 young activists between the ages of 16 and 24 took part in a series of workshops and training sessions on campaigning and activism.

‘I have loved working and receiving support through Amnesty and hope to work with them after this programme has finished.’

Dionne, Rise Up participant

‘Rise Up has given me the foundations to build my campaign.’

Liam, Rise Up participant

‘Rise Up is important because we still live in a society in which young people are still being told that what they think about the world is not as important as those who are older. This is the world we are going to live in, so we need to have a say.’

Noah, Rise Up participant

# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UK

In 2019, working in partnership with like-minded charities, NGOs and activists, Amnesty International UK helped to secure vital reforms in Northern Ireland, campaigned for children's rights, defended peaceful protesters, and supported moves to bring human rights treaties into Scottish law.



Protesters call for the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland during the 2017 Love Equality march in Belfast. © Niall Carson/PA Images

## Success in Northern Ireland

We celebrated a landmark human rights victory in Northern Ireland in 2019. In July, MPs in Westminster voted to legalise same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland, bringing the region into line with the rest of the UK. At midnight on 22 October, the legislation came into force after the deadline passed without a devolved government being formed. Amnesty International UK had campaigned strongly on the issue of marriage equality in Northern Ireland for many years

‘This is an incredible moment for so many people, especially for same-sex couples, who will now be treated as equal citizens in their own country.’

**Patrick Corrigan**, Amnesty International UK's programme director for Northern Ireland



© PA Images



## Child citizenship campaign

Thousands of children who have every right to British citizenship are charged exorbitant fees to register as British citizens. This affects children who were born in the UK, or who were brought here at a young age, and have lived in the UK ever since. We worked on this issue throughout 2019, including in our Write for Rights campaign.

We organised a petition calling for a reduction in the fees and supported a legal challenge brought by two children affected by the problem and the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens. More than 40,000 people signed the petition, which called on the Home Secretary to:

- Lower the registration fee to the actual cost of administrations
- Exempt the entire fee for children in local authority care
- Waive the fee for children who cannot afford the administrative cost of registration.

In response to the legal challenge, the High Court ruled in December that the £1,012 fee that the Home Office charges to register a child as a British citizen is unlawful.

**'I am glad I got to tell the court my story. I was born in this country and have lived here all my life. It's not right that I'm excluded from citizenship by a huge fee.'**

**'O'**, aged 12, one of the two children who brought the case to the High Court



## The Stansted 15

The Stansted 15 are a group of activists who peacefully prevented an immigration removal flight from taking off from Stansted Airport. They were convicted of a terrorism-related offence for their actions. In February 2019 the Stansted 15 were spared prison terms, instead receiving suspended sentences or community orders. Ahead of the trial, we wrote to the Crown Prosecution Service calling for the excessive 'endangering safety at an aerodrome' charge – which carries a maximum penalty of a life sentence – to be dropped. We are concerned it may have been brought to discourage others from taking non-violent direct action in defence of human rights. Almost 12,000 Amnesty International supporters sent messages of support to the Stansted 15.

## Bringing human rights treaties into domestic law

The UK has agreed to implement seven UN human rights treaties, but until the obligations in those treaties are enshrined in an Act of Parliament, the rights they contain are not legally enforceable. In 2019 Amnesty International UK worked closely with other organisations to bring these obligations into Scottish law. The Scottish government has now committed to pass legislation incorporating the Convention on the Rights of the Child into law before the 2020 Scottish parliamentary elections. The First Minister has also committed to incorporate the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women into law. We are now campaigning for the Scottish parliament to bring in the strongest and most comprehensive human rights legislation we can achieve.

**'If we succeed in Scotland, perhaps we can build on this to ensure human rights are protected across the UK.'**

**Naomi McAuliffe**, Amnesty International UK's programme director for Scotland

# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UK: REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

Throughout 2019 Amnesty International UK campaigned on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. We campaigned alongside migrant women who have suffered domestic abuse, called on the UK government to let refugee families reunite, and harnessed the power of football to help welcome refugees into their new communities.



A scene from Amnesty International UK's 'family-free zone' campaign video © AI

## Families Together

Our I Welcome campaign is designed to create a welcoming environment for refugees in the UK. One of its key aims is to change unfair Home Office rules that separate child refugees from their parents just when they need them most. In 2019 we convened more than 40 experts, grassroots supporters, refugees and asylum seekers to help us develop the next phase of the campaign. Given the UK's shifting political climate, we focused on mobilising the public to call for reform of the refugee family reunion rules. This strand of our work was named Families Together.

In March, we cordoned off an area in London's South Bank to create a makeshift 'family-free zone' to highlight the issue. The resulting footage was turned into a campaign video that was viewed more than 1.5 million

times. Over the course of the year more than 50,000 people signed our petition (a further 25,000 added their names in early 2020) and many wrote to the Home Secretary to call for action. Multi-award-winning actress Olivia Colman, an Amnesty International UK ambassador, also wrote a powerful article in support of our campaign in the Daily Telegraph in November.

**'It is utterly heart-wrenching to even imagine being separated from a child... But for refugee families in the UK, separation from their children is too often a reality.'**

**Olivia Colman**

## Refugee casework

Amnesty International UK assists with the legal cases of asylum seekers, trafficking victims and others who need international protection in the UK. We do not directly represent individuals: instead we act as an independent third party, providing information and analysis on human rights conditions in countries from where people have fled. We also submit reports tailored to the specific issues in individual cases, as well as broader test or guidance cases, to assist immigration officials and judges.

In 2019, we intervened in 33 cases from countries including Egypt, Pakistan, Cameroon, Somalia, Sudan and Iraq. Three of the cases – one related to Iraq and two involving Sudan – set important precedents for the future. Our work helped people who required life-saving medical treatment, human rights defenders seeking respite and training, and children threatened with deportation to countries where they did not speak the language, as well as people fleeing persecution related to their political beliefs, religion, race, nationality and other factors.



A Football Welcomes event at the QPR v Nottingham Forest match © Michael Zemanek/BPI/REX/Shutterstock

## Football Welcomes

A record-breaking 177 clubs – almost triple the previous year – came together in April 2019 to take part in our annual Football Welcomes initiative, which celebrates the contribution refugees make to the beautiful game and their local communities. Clubs including Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Norwich and Celtic offered free tickets, stadium tours, training sessions and specially arranged matches to people from refugee backgrounds. The initiative received widespread media coverage and support from clubs, players, celebrities, MPs of all parties, and fans. On Twitter the Football Welcomes hashtag was used 2,000 times. ‘In a climate of rising hatred across the UK and Europe, it’s important everyone in football is united in welcoming refugees into our country and our game. We’re right behind Amnesty’s Football Welcomes,’ said Kick it Out, football’s equalities and inclusion organisation.

In August we launched the three-year Football Welcomes Community Project, which sees us working with the charitable organisations of five clubs – Liverpool, Leicester City, Aston Villa, Middlesbrough and Doncaster Rovers – to set up ‘community alliances’ with local refugee groups, charities, amateur teams, fans’ groups, schools and others. It aims to create a more welcoming environment for refugees and asylum seekers and help them develop a greater sense of belonging as they settle into new communities.

‘Delighted that @LCFC [Leicester City] is taking part in @AmnestyUK’s #FootballWelcomes weekend. Great to see.’

**Gary Lineker**, Match of the Day presenter and former England striker

## Protecting migrant women from domestic abuse

Many migrant women in the UK who experience domestic abuse are prevented from accessing public funds and life-saving refuges. They are often too scared to report the violence to the police or other public services for fear of being detained or deported.

During Write for Rights 2019, we worked closely with Step Up Migrant Women, a coalition of more than 50 organisations, to amplify the voices, stories and experiences of migrant women. We used the campaign to mobilise our supporters and the public to urge the UK government to provide equal protection to all survivors of domestic abuse and ensure migrant women survivors can access the specialist services they need safely and free from discrimination. We received a huge response and this has strengthened our advocacy and campaigning work.

Following the general election, the government announced in the Queen’s Speech on 16 December that it will reintroduce the Domestic Abuse Bill with the aim of ‘strengthening protections for victims and providing new enforcement mechanisms’. As part of the Step Up Migrant Women coalition, we will keep up the pressure on the government.



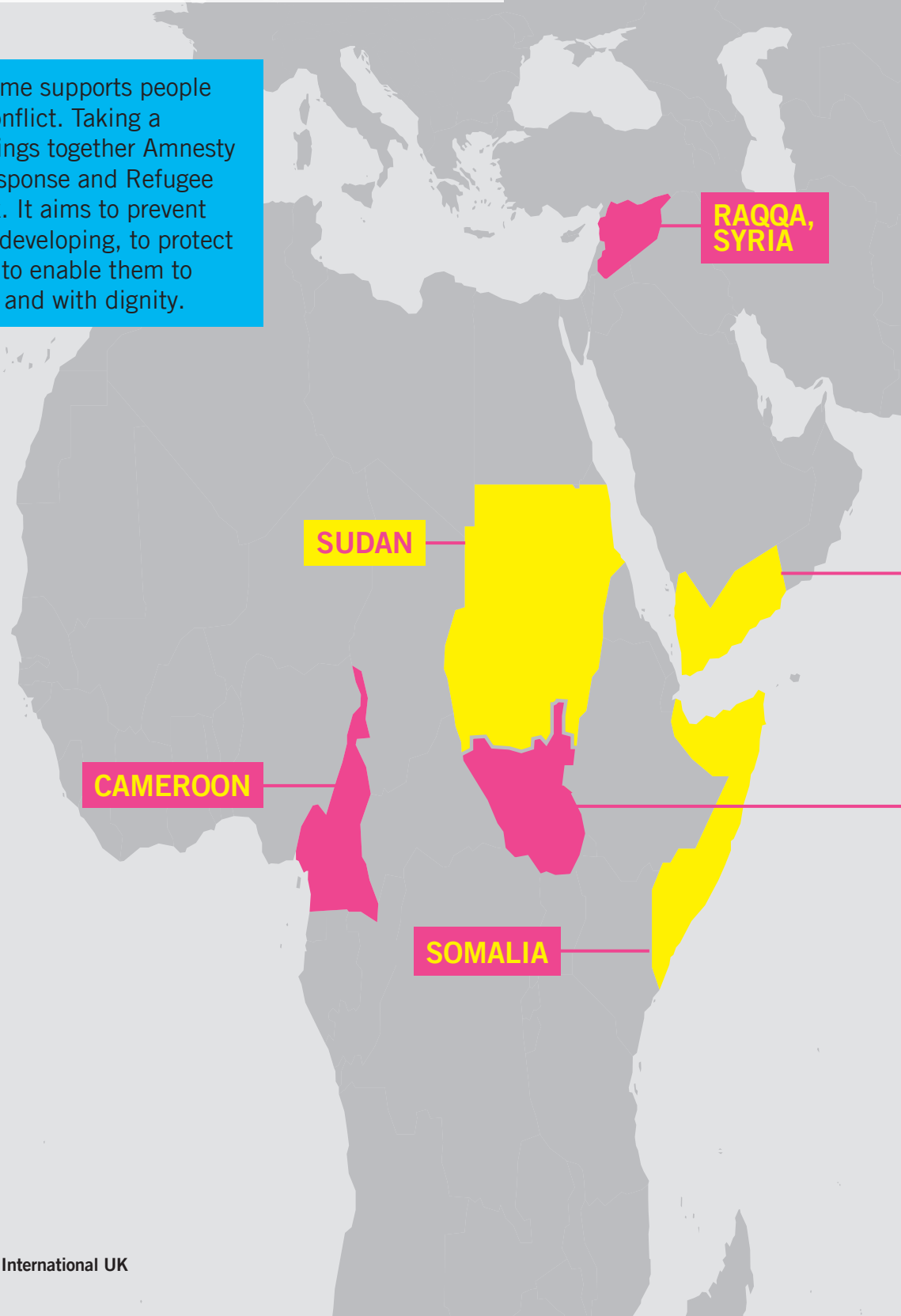
© Al/Marie-Anne Ventoura

During our campaign for migrant survivors of domestic abuse, our supporters sent more than **10,000 messages** urging the UK government to act.

# BE THERE Responding to crisis and armed conflict

During 2019 Amnesty International responded to human rights crises across the globe. We exposed war crimes, forced governments to admit responsibility for causing civilian deaths and called for them to suspend arms sales, challenged 'fake news', ensured justice for victims, and helped to persuade the UN to renew arms embargoes and deployments of peacekeeping forces.

The **BE THERE** programme supports people affected by crisis and conflict. Taking a strategic approach, it brings together Amnesty International's Crisis Response and Refugee and Migrant Rights work. It aims to prevent conflict and crises from developing, to protect people as they flee, and to enable them to build new lives in safety and with dignity.



Researcher Rasha Mohamed (left) and crisis response advisor Rawya Rageh interviewing a survivor of a landmine explosion in Aden, Yemen. © AI



## YEMEN

Our investigations, advocacy and legal actions prompted countries – including the UK – to suspend or rein in their arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose military coalition is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Yemeni civilians. Our open-source investigation *When arms go astray* revealed how the UAE is diverting arms to unaccountable militias known to be committing war crimes in Yemen.

## SOUTH SUDAN

Amnesty International's research and advocacy helped to persuade the UN Security Council to renew its arms embargo on South Sudan for another year. We have consistently shown how the country's armed conflict has resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, massive internal displacement and a severe humanitarian crisis.



Members of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces take part in a drill at their barracks in Rejaf, South Sudan. © Alex McBride/AFP via Getty Images

# BE THERE Responding to crisis and armed conflict

A displaced Sudanese woman walks past a UN-African Union vehicle at a camp for internally displaced people in Darfur. © Ashraf Shazly/AFP via Getty Images



## SUDAN

Our investigators uncovered disturbing new evidence that Sudanese government forces and allied militias were continuing to commit war crimes and other serious human rights violations in Darfur, including the complete or partial destruction of at least 45 villages, unlawful killings, and sexual violence. Coupled with a focused advocacy campaign, this research played a significant role in the UN Security Council's decision to maintain its peacekeeping operation in Darfur, an outcome that was previously considered unlikely.

## CAMEROON

Amnesty International's investigation report featured in an acclaimed BBC Africa Eye documentary, *Anatomy of a Killing*, recognised for broadcasting excellence by the prestigious US Peabody Awards. Our investigation countered Cameroon authorities' dismissal of a viral video showing soldiers executing women and children as 'fake news'. US State Department officials said our work strongly influenced their decision to suspend some military aid to Cameroon. It was recognised by the prestigious US Peabody Awards, which celebrate broadcasting excellence.



Two men wait by the road hoping to pick up casual labouring work – a dangerous activity that often involves clearing destroyed or damaged buildings – in Raqqa, Syria. © AI

## RAQQA, SYRIA

Based on 18 months of research, our ground-breaking open-source report *War in Raqqa: Rhetoric versus Reality* revealed how the US-led military coalition's bombardment of the city in 2017 killed hundreds of civilians and rendered many areas uninhabitable. Combined with our advocacy work, it forced the coalition to admit responsibility, for the first time, for more than 180 civilian deaths. We later used the report to create an interactive website and a five-week exhibition in London, featuring survivor testimonies and virtual reality experiences. The project won a Times Higher Education award.

**'Thousands of civilians were killed or injured in the US-led coalition's offensive to rid Raqqa of ISIS, whose snipers and mines had turned the city into a death trap... Coalition forces razed Raqqa, but they cannot erase the truth.'**

**Donatella Rovera**, Amnesty International's senior crisis response adviser

## SOMALIA

Our nine-month investigation exposed the US government's secret air war in Somalia. Our report, *The Hidden US War in Somalia*, focused on just five of more than 100 US air strikes over the past two years. These five attacks killed at least 14 civilians and injured eight more, and appear to have violated international humanitarian law. Some may amount to war crimes. Our investigation resulted in the US military admitting, for the first time, that its air strikes had caused civilian casualties. In an attempt to reach new audiences, we also created a graphic novel based on the report and translated it into multiple languages.

**'The civilian death toll we've uncovered in just a handful of strikes suggests the shroud of secrecy surrounding the US role in Somalia's war is actually a smokescreen for impunity.'**

**Brian Castner**, Amnesty International's senior crisis advisor on arms and military operations



The aftermath of a US air strike that destroyed a Toyota SUV and killed three civilians in Abdo Dibile, Somalia, in March 2019. The US Africa Command claimed the victims were Al-Shabaab 'terrorists' but an extensive Amnesty investigation proved otherwise. © (Source image © 2019 DigitalGlobe, a Maxar Company)

Long-term, in-depth investigations into serious human rights violations are at the core of Amnesty International's work, and form the basis of our campaigning and advocacy work.

## Digital investigations

Technology poses an increasing threat to human rights but also provides us with new ways to document violations, raise public awareness and hold abusers to account. In 2019 we relaunched the Citizen Evidence Lab, an online resource that brings together human rights researchers, journalists, students and others to explore and share digital investigative techniques.

Through our innovative Amnesty Decoders network, which crowdsources human rights investigations, more than 5,000 people helped us to expose the shocking level of online abuse faced by female politicians in India. The Amnesty Decoders network also helped reveal the true extent of war crimes in the Syrian city of Raqqa (see pages 10-13), and a multi-media website, *The Ruins of Liberation*, provided a behind-the-scenes insight into our investigation.

Our Digital Verifications Corps, which trains volunteer students to verify videos and photos of potential human rights violations, investigated abuses linked to the protests in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Hong Kong, Iraq, Iran, Haiti and Western Sahara. This allowed us to respond rapidly to events and fed into our press releases, social media campaigns, explainer videos and research reports.

## Extrajudicial killings in the Philippines

In July our *They just kill* report demonstrated that police in the Philippines are operating with total impunity as they kill people from poor neighbourhoods as part of President Rodrigo Duterte's brutal 'war on drugs'. Amnesty International investigators identified 20 cases in which 27 people were killed, many of which appear to be extrajudicial executions, across Bulacan province between May 2018 and April 2019. The report urged the UN Human Rights Council to launch an investigation into the situation, something council members later voted to do.

## Protecting those most at risk

In 2019 we branched into new areas of human rights investigations, focusing on the human rights of those most at risk during and after armed conflict.

In **Yemen** we investigated the impact of conflict on people with disabilities. Our report, *Excluded: Living with disabilities in Yemen's armed conflict*, was based on six months of investigation, three in-country visits, and almost 100 interviews. It was the result of close collaboration with people with disabilities, disability organisations and local partners.

We also carried out our first investigation into the impact of war and displacement on the rights of older people. Tens of thousands of older women and men are among more than a million people from **Myanmar's** ethnic minorities who have been displaced to camps by armed conflict and military abuse. Our report, *'Fleeing my Whole Life': Older people's experience of conflict and displacement in Myanmar*, revealed that humanitarian efforts often overlook the specific needs of older people.

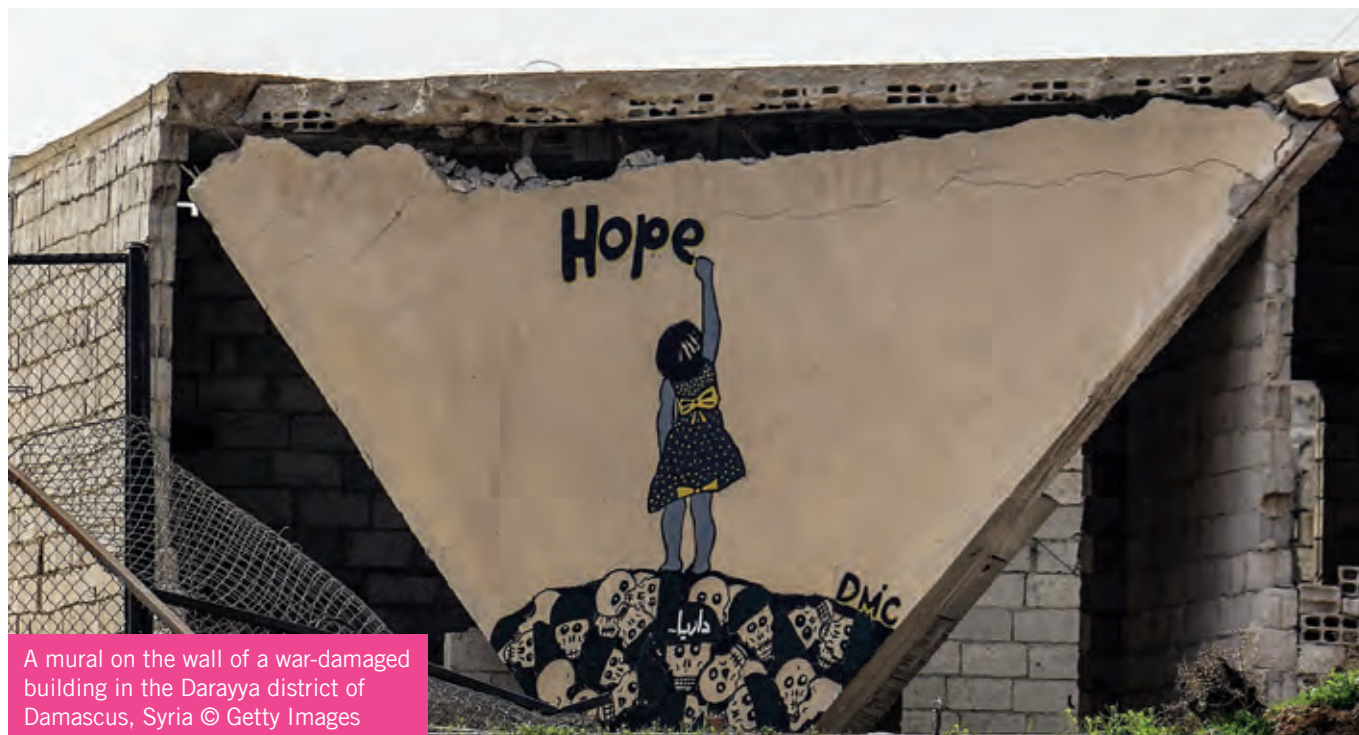
Financial support from the TCC Foundation enabled us to investigate the impacts of conflict and crisis on children. In November 2019, we started investigating human rights abuses perpetrated against children in northeastern **Nigeria** by the Boko Haram armed group and the Nigerian military. The findings, published in 2020, showed not only the broad range of abuses against children during the fighting, but also those that continue long afterwards. It also outlined what is needed to better respond to children in such environments.

**'Older people need to be better included in all aspects of humanitarian response – responding more effectively to older people's rights begins with engaging their unique skills and perspective.'**

**Matthew Wells**, Amnesty International Senior Crisis Advisor

# JUSTICE FOR SYRIA

Amnesty International UK continued to support the work of Syrian human rights defenders and civil society organisations in 2019.



Over the course of the year we held a series of strategy and training workshops in Turkey, France and the Netherlands for organisations such as Ta'afi, which supports Syrian human rights activists who were detained and tortured in Syria. These sessions were designed to improve the strategy, structure, research skills, evidence collection, and advocacy work of the organisations.

We also supported the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression and the Syrian Centre for Research and Legal Studies. These organisations helped to secure the arrests of two former Syrian regime intelligence officers in Germany in February 2019. The men were suspected of involvement in the torture of anti-regime activists, an abuse Amnesty International has extensively documented in Syria over the years. They were subsequently charged with crimes against humanity and went on trial in Germany in April 2020.

Alongside this work, we helped to film *Bringing Assad to Justice*, a hard-hitting documentary that is due out in late 2020. We also met with a range of UK government officials who focus on Syria, urging them to provide much-needed funding for Syrian human rights activists and organisations. We managed to secure a range of commitments from the officials regarding investments in justice and accountability work.

'We started almost from zero. We did not have knowledge and experience of many things. We did not know what a proposal is. We did not have fundraising. We got support from Amnesty UK, which organised several workshops where we learned how to sustain SCM, and our advocacy and communications.'

**Mazen Darwish**, head of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), who is working to bring torturers to justice

**Two suspected former intelligence officials** of the Syrian regime were arrested in Germany in February 2019 and charged with crimes against humanity, thanks to the work of Syrian human rights defenders who are supported by Amnesty International.

# BE THERE Welcoming refugees

Community sponsorship is a simple but radical idea: ordinary citizens help refugees reach, and settle into, a new country. Programmes vary around the world but ‘sponsors’ generally have to raise funds, enter into an agreement with their government, and secure accommodation before refugees arrive. In 2019 Amnesty International supported community sponsorship schemes in nine countries.

## Iceland and Denmark

In 2019 there was significant progress on community sponsorship in Iceland and Denmark. Amnesty International organisations in both countries spearheaded detailed discussions between government, civil society groups and others to determine how the initiative could look in their respective national contexts. Amnesty Denmark ended 2019 by staging a major conference on community sponsorship in collaboration with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The first of its kind in the country, the event featured speakers from countries such as Canada – where the first community sponsorship scheme was founded in the late 1970s – as well as sponsors, sponsored refugees, and city council members.

## Ireland

In partnership with local refugee organisations, Amnesty International was instrumental in getting community sponsorship off the ground in Ireland. The pilot project, which forged positive relationships between the government, civil society groups, local communities and the private sector, was expanded into a nationwide scheme in November. We are now helping to establish a national organisation to support the scheme, and our local groups and networks are mobilising people to become sponsors.

‘We were made to feel welcome, like we were part of the family – we weren’t treated like refugees; we were treated like people.’

Syrian refugees **Rahaf and Monther**, who arrived in the UK with their children on a community sponsorship scheme

Amnesty International is supporting community sponsorship schemes in **9** countries.

## Global Refugee Forum

In December Amnesty International joined in the first-ever Global Refugee Forum, held by the UNHCR, the UN’s refugee agency, in Geneva, Switzerland. The event brought together heads of state, ministers, officials, international organisations, NGOs and refugees to discuss key issues and challenges. It also officially launched the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative States Network, which is designed to encourage countries to start their own community sponsorship programmes and share best practice.



A new life in Canada: Amir Fattal and Nour Ammana, originally from Aleppo in Syria, have opened a street kitchen selling Syrian food  
© Stephanie Foden/AI

# THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Prolonged drought, devastating tropical storms, brutal wildfires and heatwaves – for millions of people around the world, strong action to tackle the climate crisis means the difference between life and death.

## The human rights impact of the climate crisis

During 2019 Amnesty International expanded its work on the human rights impact of the climate crisis. We highlighted the catastrophic impact of cyclones Idai and Kenneth – extreme weather events that will become more common as the world continues to heat – on southern Africa. And we published evidence to show how illegal land seizures in the Brazilian Amazon fuel environmental destruction and violate the rights of Indigenous peoples.

On 18-19 September Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the UN and several other organisations staged the first ever global summit on the climate crisis and human rights. Held in New York the Peoples' Summit on Climate, Rights and Human Survival was attended by more than 200 representatives of Indigenous peoples, workers, academia, and environmental and human rights groups. They adopted a landmark declaration calling on governments and corporations to take urgent action.

In December, as government ministers and officials gathered in Madrid for the 25th UN Climate Change Conference (COP25), we urged governments to protect human rights in the face of the climate crisis, calling for ambitious action to keep the global average temperature rise below 1.5°C and for the burden of the crisis to be shared fairly. The next conference, originally scheduled for November 2020 in Glasgow, has been delayed by Covid-19. But our campaigning continues.

## The right to protest

When the Metropolitan Police used a Section 14 order to ban Extinction Rebellion protests in October, we criticised the action as an unlawful restriction on the right to peaceful assembly. Thankfully the courts agreed with us. In November a High Court judge quashed the order, which gives police the power to impose restrictions on demonstrations if it is thought they may result in serious public disorder.



Greta Thunberg and former Amnesty International secretary general Kumi Naidoo © Andy DelGiudice/AI

## The growth of youth activism

Young people will feel the impact of the climate crisis longer and more deeply than older generations, so it is little surprise they have become leading campaigners. On 16 September Greta Thunberg and the movement she inspired – Fridays for Future – received the Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award for 2019.

‘This award is for all of those millions of people, young people, around the world who together make up the movement called Fridays for Future. All these fearless youth, fighting for their future. A future they should be able to take for granted. But as it looks now, they cannot.’

Greta Thunberg

# EDUCATING PEOPLE IN THE UK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

A key part of Amnesty International's work is ensuring that everyone knows, values and can claim their human rights. We do this through our human rights education programme, which works with children, young people and adults across the UK. Here are some of our projects from 2019.

## Working in schools

Our volunteer school speakers inspire children and young people to take action for human rights. In 2019, their talks, workshops and assemblies reached more than 27,000 pupils and students across the UK and were described by teachers as 'magical' and 'very informative'.

'His presentation was thorough and thoughtful and met all the needs of the learners. I have never seen our students so engaged and enthusiastic.'

A teacher describing an Amnesty International school speaker

- More than **33,000** children and young people in the UK took part in our human rights education activities in 2019
- Our school speakers reached more than **27,000** pupils and students in the UK
- More than **270** teachers benefited from our training programme
- More than **22,000** schools received our free human rights teaching materials
- Our education programme for adults reached more than **5,000** people



## Working with teachers

We also give teachers the knowledge and resources they need to teach human rights in the classroom. In 2019, more than 270 teachers took part in our workshops and training programmes, which include a one-year certification course that equips participants to teach their colleagues about human rights. Our half-termly e-newsletter, TeachRights, has more than 5,200 subscribers.

## Teaching resources

More than 22,000 schools received our free teaching materials, which span early years to adult education, in 2019. Highlights include updated resources for the *Words That Burn* project, which aims to get students excited about poetry, human rights and their ability to create. We also produced a new Welsh-language secondary school education pack.

## Adult education

Nearly 5,000 adults in the UK took part in our human rights education activities in 2019, including our massive open online courses (MOOCs – see page 20).



# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

Global human rights education is a priority for Amnesty International. We work to ensure children, young people and adults everywhere know and are able to claim their rights. As well as our programme we ran a wide range of education projects around the world in 2019, including a programme in Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Senegal tackling female genital mutilation and early forced marriage through community-based human rights education.

## Human Rights Academy

Launched as a pilot project in the Middle East and North Africa in 2017, our Human Rights Academy is an online resource that provides free access to quality human rights education for students, activists, and others across the region and beyond. It continued to expand in 2019: 56 courses – 18 more than the previous year – were available in 12 different languages. In total, the academy had more than 75,000 learners in 2019.

‘I think the Introduction to Human Rights course is perfect... Unlike typical lectures, you can check if you understood the concepts with flashcards or with a lot of examples. The Academy is really an effective learning tool.’

**A South Korean student** discussing the Human Rights Academy

## MOOCs

Developed in partnership with edX, which was founded by Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Amnesty International’s massive open online courses (MOOCs) allow us to reach a new and wider global audience. They are available in several different languages and cover topics such as refugees, human rights defenders, freedom of expression, and refugee rights.

In 2019 Amnesty International ran **197 human rights education projects** that engaged more than **1.8 million people** across the world.

**56** courses in **12** languages offered by our Human Rights Academy.



Young human rights activists in Salvador, Brazil. © Shona Hamilton/AI

## Human Rights Friendly Schools

One of our key projects is the encouragement of Human Rights Friendly Schools – an educational approach that empowers young people, teachers and the wider school community to create human rights friendly school communities. It addresses the whole school, and integrates human rights values, principles and knowledge into key areas of school life: curriculum, school environment, relationships and governance.

In 2019, Amnesty International India worked with human rights clubs in Tamil Nadu and Telengana states on the Our Safety, Our Rights campaign, helping children to understand and identify the various forms of abuse, especially sexual abuse. The campaign also empowered children to speak up and report abuse without fear, providing guidelines, helpline numbers and other ways to seek assistance. In 2019, around 250 schools used the Our Safety, Our Rights teacher’s manual, children’s awareness booklet and posters.

‘Human rights education accompanies people as they move through their own transformative journeys and take action to make the world a better, fairer, more just place.’

**Julie Verhaar**, acting secretary general, Amnesty International

# A WOMEN'S RIGHTS REVOLUTION

Our three-year education programme to tackle female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Senegal aims to protect more than 22,000 women and girls from these abuses.

Since 2017 Amnesty International UK has worked in partnership with our counterparts in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Senegal to change attitudes to FGM and child marriage through a wide-ranging human rights education programme. This is supported by the Department for International Development's UK Aid Match scheme, which matched pound for pound the £810,000 received from Amnesty International UK supporters and members of the public in 2016.

By the end of 2019 the programme had helped to avert abuse in the 75 project communities in the three countries. Fifty cases of FGM or attempted FGM and 86 cases of child marriage were reported to the alert committees or local authorities: abuse was prevented, perpetrators were prosecuted and survivors received support and were able to return to their education. In Sierra Leone, there are normally 20-30 cases of FGM reported per community during the month of December because FGM is traditionally carried out during this period just after harvest. But in the last quarter of 2019, no cases of FGM were reported in the project communities there.

The programme's workshops and engagement sessions cater for both adults and children. Grassroots organisations, community leaders, youth groups, and teachers are involved to ensure it reaches the widest possible audience. More than 25,000 women and girls have taken part in the programme. As well as taking a stand against abuse and claiming their own human rights, they are also helping others in neighbouring towns and villages to do the same. Since the launch of the programme:

- **65 human rights clubs** have been established in classrooms and youth groups to raise awareness and create safe spaces to learn about the risks of FGM and child marriage;
- **75 'alert committees'**, community groups trained to detect, prevent and report cases of FGM and early marriage to the authorities, have been set up;
- **68 communities** have committed to ending the practice of FGM and child marriage within their communities through signing public declarations.

'We must risk our lives to save our daughters from female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage. We know that both practices are harmful for the health of girls and women. That's why, no one will be allowed to cut a girl in this village any more. The one who dares marry a girl under 18 will be sent to the police.'

A community leader in Koulogo village, Burkina Faso

More than **25,000 women and girls** in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Senegal have taken part in the programme so far.



© AI

# LOOKING AHEAD

When we made our plans at the end of 2019 we did not bargain for a deadly global pandemic. But Covid-19 has only reinforced our determination to ensure that the rights of all people, everywhere, are respected, protected and fulfilled.



A Black Lives Matter protester faces the police at a demonstration in London.  
© Alex Pantling/Getty Images

Covid-19 affects our rights to life, health, livelihood, education, freedom of association, worship and non-discrimination, among many others. The decisions governments and international bodies take today will be felt for decades to come. Alongside the pandemic, we have seen the rise of a global movement against structural racism, sparked by the horrific killing of George Floyd in the USA. Both events are wake-up calls and potential catalysts for reinventing our world for the better.

## *Signs of hope*

The pandemic has inspired a new-found sense of community and mutual support, and a widespread recognition that the lives of nearly all of us depend on healthcare systems and their workers. There appears to be a new – perhaps fleeting – appreciation of essential workers and for the contribution of migrant workers, whether in hospitals or harvesting in fields. Black Lives Matter protests have also brought issues of police brutality and structural racism to the world's attention and there are signs that real change could result.

In an era where radical social, economic and political change is required to address issues like the climate crisis, the response to Covid-19 in particular demonstrates what is possible. Groundbreaking legislation has been introduced, long-held policies changed, vast state resources mobilised. Millions of people adapted to new lifestyles, and health concerns were put before economic considerations. Human rights change can happen – given public demand and political will.

## **Our response**

In 2019 Amnesty International UK completed an in-depth piece of research to identify how we will make long-term, fundamental improvements to human rights in the UK. Over the coming years we will increase our focus on economic, cultural and social rights in the UK, alongside our more established work on civil and political rights. A similar pattern will be seen across the global Amnesty International movement.

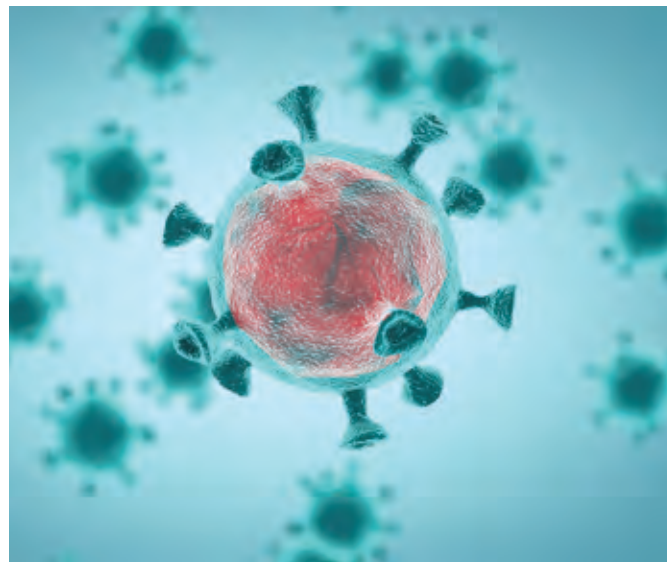
‘At times like these, gross injustice and inequalities at home and around the world stand out more starkly than ever.’

**Kate Allen**, director, Amnesty International UK

© Getty Images



A Black Lives Matter protester at a demonstration in London. © David Mbiyu/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images



© Getty Images

## Human rights education in the UK in 2020

Amnesty International UK's education plans for 2020 include developing new human rights-themed teaching materials, delivering a new massive open online course (MOOC; see page 20) on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, increasing the number of adults participating in our programmes, and re-launching our Amnesty Trainer programme of human rights workshops.

In the UK, we will aim to ensure that:

- Everyone in the UK can live a life of dignity, in a free, fair and just society. They will be able to achieve better standards of life, free from want and fear.
- The UK will be a fully rights-respecting country that is more equal and balanced, with human rights abuses greatly reduced and abusers held to account.
- People's basic needs are met and they have the foundations and opportunities to live a life of worth and reach their potential.

## Be There 2020

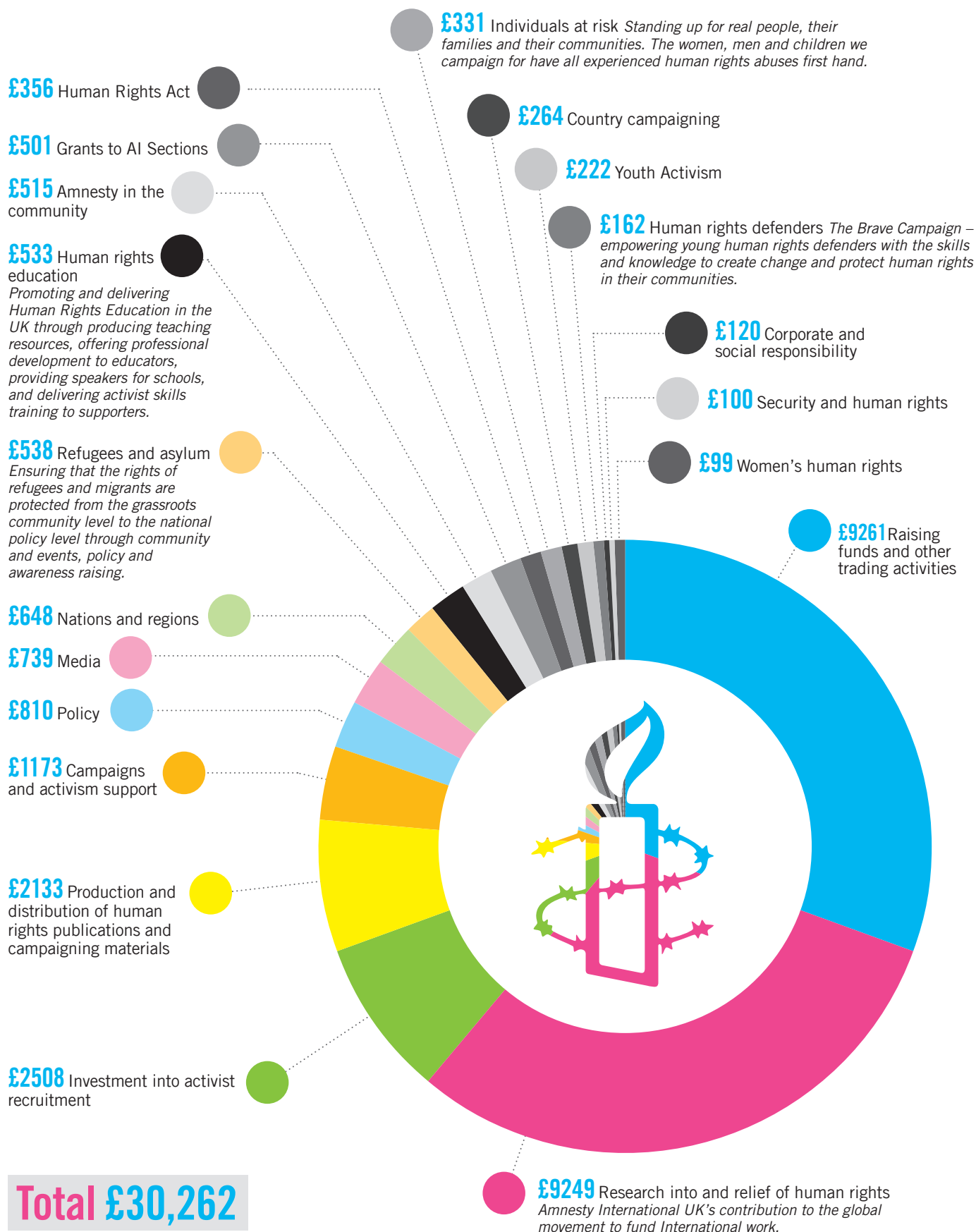
Over the next 12 months Amnesty International's ambitious Be There programme will focus on:

- **Preventing crises and protecting people during crisis and displacement:** This will include responding to crises as they develop, carrying out research on human rights and environmental issues in the Amazon, and conducting research and advocacy work on the impact of conflicts on children, women, and people with disabilities.
- **Building new lives in safety and with dignity:** We will continue our community refugee sponsorship efforts (see page 10), work to form a global Refugee Advisory Group to support this, and carry out research missions to Syria and Venezuela to investigate forcible returns of refugees.

# WHERE THE MONEY GOES

## How we spent our money in 2019

(£000s)



# OUR FINANCES AND LEGAL STRUCTURE

## Amnesty International UK Funding our human rights work

Amnesty International in the UK is part of the worldwide Amnesty International movement. There are two distinct but related legal entities: Amnesty International UK Section Charitable Trust ('the Charitable Trust'), a charity registered in England and Wales (no 1051681) and Scotland (no 03139939), and Amnesty International United Kingdom Section ('the UK Section'), a limited company (company number: 01735872). Each entity is governed by its own Board.

The figures presented above are for the aggregated financial activities of these separate legal entities, presented for illustrative purposes only.

The Charitable Trust fulfils its objectives by funding a range of charitable activities, in the UK and internationally, to promote the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international treaties. It gives most of its grants to the UK Section and the International Secretariat of Amnesty International.

The UK Section is responsible for the bulk of our campaigning, education and advocacy work in the UK. It is primarily funded by its members and by grants from the Charitable Trust. Some of the work featured in this review was carried out by the UK Section.

For full audited accounts of both entities see:  
[amnesty.org.uk/finances](https://amnesty.org.uk/finances)

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# WE NEED YOUR HELP

## to protect human rights in the 2020s

We are Amnesty International. We work to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

As a global movement of over 10 million people, Amnesty International is the world's largest grassroots human rights organisation.

We investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilise the public, and help transform societies to create a safer, more just world.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion.

Our vision is a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

In 2020 the coronavirus pandemic and the upsurge of anti-racist protest, first in the USA and then around the world, highlighted the inequalities that threaten human lives and human rights. In this crisis, Amnesty International is defending the most vulnerable. Your continued support is needed now more than ever.

If you require this document in a  
in a larger font please contact:  
**Email [philanthropy@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:philanthropy@amnesty.org.uk)**

### How your money could help

**£1,500** could cover the annual cost of delivering training to teachers in human rights education, linked to the relevant curriculum area for schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**£5,000** could cover the cost for two Amnesty International crisis investigators to attend hostile environment and emergency first aid training.

**£10,000** could help us deliver an online training module for open-source human rights investigators.

**£25,000** could support one year of training for our network of Amnesty Decoders – volunteers who help our investigators sift through masses of pictures and data.

**£50,000** could pay for two investigations to be carried out in crisis zones, including travel, local expertise and logistics.

### Contact us

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