

Amnesty International UK

STATEMENT

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RACISM INQUIRY AT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK MOVES TO FINAL PHASE

The independent inquiry into allegations of racism at Amnesty UK is moving to its final phase with the presentation of its report including findings and recommendations scheduled for the end of May this year.

The independent inquiry conducted by Global HPO Ltd was commissioned by a joint group representing different parts of Amnesty UK, including the Section Board, Amnesty activists, the staff trade union shop, management, and former staff in October 2021.

The first phase of the inquiry has now been completed (April 2022). The phase included:

- review of policies and other evidence over recent years;
- data analysis of employment information from 2017 to 2021; and
- one-to-one interviews and focus groups involving approximately 130 people, around 90 of whom are currently employed by Amnesty UK with others drawn from boards, activist groups and some former staff.

Global HPO's view is that Amnesty UK exhibits institutional racism; and previously failed to properly embed equality, inclusion and anti-racism in its practices.

The inquiry has found that there have been some improvements since summer 2021, but to ensure that equality, inclusion and anti-racism is embedded in the DNA of Amnesty UK, significant progress is required in several areas including:

- leadership and management capabilities;
- using best practice to collate and effectively evaluate equality and diversity data;
- working culture across the whole organisation;
- governance capabilities and oversight;
- organisational infrastructure;
- learning and development; and
- updating and reflecting best practice in policies and procedures.

These will be detailed in the inquiry's report.

To help develop its recommendations, Global HPO has set up a series of workshops with Amnesty UK staff, board members and trustees on areas of improvement across working culture and working practices.

The Amnesty UK boards have committed to the publication of the inquiry's report and recommendations in full when it is delivered by Global HPO in May, and have committed to the implementation of its recommendations for improvement.

Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty UK's Interim Chief Executive, said:

"It is important that we recognise and clearly acknowledge that Amnesty UK did exhibit institutional racism, and over many years failed to properly embed equality, inclusion and anti-racism in its culture and practices. Staff and supporters have rightly expected, and deserved, better.

"Our values and mission must be at the heart of the working environment we offer to all our colleagues.

"We will be working closely with Global HPO during the final co-creation phase of their inquiry, to feed into their thinking on the actions that we need to take."

Sen Raj, Chair of the Board of Amnesty UK Section, said:

"As an international human rights movement, we must prioritise anti-racism, and we must not underestimate the work needed to transform the working practices, activist dynamics, and organisational culture of Amnesty UK.

"We are especially grateful to our staff and activists from Global Majority backgrounds who contribute their physical, emotional, and intellectual labour to address institutional racism within our movement.

"We are looking forward to Global HPO's report and recommendations in May, so we can add to and accelerate the anti-racism work we are doing."