

AmnestyInternational UK
NATIONAL
CONFERENCE
AND AGM 2006



2006 AGM DECISIONS

Working Party A: Vision & Mission

A1: Use of Force

This AGM calls on AIUK to call on the next ICM to rescind ICM 2005 Decision 2, Exceptional Position, Paragraph III (see notes for this paragraph)."

The motion was overwhelmingly defeated in plenary

A2: Use of Force

Noting AI can now call for the use of force "in exceptional circumstances"(ICM Decision 2), this AGM re-confirms the intent of motion E2 at the 2005 AGM, which called for "the membership to be consulted, and its approval sought on the following before the first call for the use of force is made:

The composition and voting procedures of the decision making body on armed interventions, and

The criteria and guidelines that the decision making body will use in arriving at a decision to call for the use of armed force".

The provisions for conscientious objection by AI members to a call for use of force by AI or AIUK.

This AGM decides

Noting that some members may wish to express their concern at either:

- a) the 2005 ICM Decision 2
- b) a specific instance of the policy's implementation

This AGM calls on the Board to work with the members to allow such views to be expressed whilst:

- cohabiting coherently with AI's policy
- maintaining the identity of a movement comprised of 2,000,000 people worldwide standing up for justice

This AGM further determines that the consultation process be completed by a full report to the membership on the ICM decision-making process to groups (local, youth and student) and networks that participated in the discussions at grassroots level.

The motion was clearly carried in plenary

A3: Sexual and Reproductive Rights

This AGM, Recalling:

- A. That there already exists a body of human rights affecting both women and men that can be termed sexual reproductive rights;

- B. That Amnesty International has over many years campaigned against abuses of a range of these rights.
- C. That the absence of a consistent and coherent policy in this area causes confusion about our boundaries of research and action, within the movement and beyond it, and that the Stop Violence Against Women campaign has highlighted difficulties and possible contradictions in existing policy;
- D. The decision of the 2005 ICM that the International Executive Committee should develop a comprehensive statement of AI's policies in the field of sexual and reproductive rights and to consult on its content, including at the next Chairs Forum, before taking decisions;
- E. That, amongst other things, this policy statement should refer to:
 - i. a commitment to defending and promoting sexual and reproductive rights within its mission in the context of its core values, and strategic goals;
 - ii. support for the right of access to information about sexual and reproductive health;
 - iii. support for the right of access to sexual and reproductive health services including contraception.
- F. That, except for the provisions set out in paragraph 2 below, all decisions related to possible AI positions on the issue of abortion will be taken at the 2007 International Council Meeting.

Decides that

- 1) AIUK should further consult its members on the comprehensive policy statement referred to in paragraphs D&E, the results of which should be reported to the Board in advance of the next Chair's Forum.
- 2) AIUK supports the development of research and action, within the current and future strategic plans, to achieve:
 - i. Decriminalisation of abortion;
 - ii. Access to quality services for the management of complications arising from abortion;
 - iii. Legal, safe and accessible abortion subject to reasonable limitation in cases of rape, sexual assault, incest, and risk to a woman's life.
- 3) The full realization of human rights should be understood to mean that a woman's right to physical and mental integrity includes a right to:
 - a. Information on the risks of abortion
 - b. Legal safe and accessible abortion should she choose to have an abortion
- 4) AIUK's membership should be further consulted on the provisions of paragraph 3 prior to the 2007 AGM, which will inform the section's approach to the next International Council Meeting;
- 5) AIUK believes that for a women to make a truly free choice about her pregnancy, motherhood should not restrict her ability to obtain an education, an income or a career, or lead to social exclusion or punishment

6) AIUK believes that Amnesty International, in defending the sexual and reproductive rights of women in accordance with its mission, should ensure that its work is informed by the understanding set out in paragraph 3.

7) AIUK recognises the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and their right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health;

8) AIUK believes that men and women must be able to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights free from coercion, discrimination and violence

9) In developing detailed policy guidelines, AI should take into account the consensus view expressed by the international community via UN sponsored conferences (e.g. Beijing/Cairo) and other internationally respected organisations with a brief to protect the rights of women and girls, as well as conflicting issues which may arise in applying this policy to children and young women; and should remain mindful of the varying opinions of the leaders of major moral and religious movements on these difficult issues

The motion was clearly carried in plenary

A4: Sexual & Reproductive Rights

Noting that Amnesty International is committed to defending the right to life of every human person, demonstrated by its worldwide campaign to abolish the death penalty in all cases, it would be contradictory to extend its policy on Sexual & Reproductive Rights to include support for the provision of abortion to any degree whatsoever, bearing in mind the generally accepted principle that human life begins at some point before birth.

This AGM decides to maintain its current neutral policy on abortion which states that “*AI takes no position on whether or not women have a right to choose to terminate unwanted pregnancies; there is no generally accepted right to abortion in international human rights law*” in order to continue supporting the fundamental principle of the right to life of every human person.

The motion was clearly defeated in plenary

A5: Sexual and Reproductive Rights

This AGM decides that AIUK should take no position on the issue of abortion

The motion was clearly defeated in plenary

A6: Consultation process: Democracy and Transparency

After 2 friendly amendments the motion now reads:

This AGM asks the Board to pay particular attention to maintaining a governance process which is open and transparent. AIUK has a history of strong group and network involvement in the democratic process. Democracy must be open and transparent and seen to be practised internally within the organisation, if AIUK is to have external credibility, and to exclude the possibility of manipulation by special interest groups.

Noting motion C5 of the 2005 AGM, and the promise that there would be a membership consultation on the subject of sexual and reproductive rights, this AGM hears with dismay that

The sexual and reproductive rights motion was passed, (with the exception of the issue of abortion -Decision 3 of ICM 2005) without a membership consultation

The consultation on abortion is not proposed on a timescale nor in a manner which will enable the membership to make an informed decision, and the opportunity to allow knowledge of the issue and informed discussion by means of a training /discussion package available to groups has been lost.

This AGM calls for a full consultation at group and network level on the subject of all Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights including abortion, on a timetable that allows for a full and open debate involving the widest possible input from the membership, prior to any changes being made in AI's position on abortion.

This AGM further calls on the UK Board to ask the IEC for a review of the process at international level which has enabled decisions of this magnitude to take place without consultation of national members.

The AGM asks the Chair and Director of AIUK to take note that a rushed process without discussion at local group, university and school level risks a loss of ownership of the outcome.

This AGM therefore instructs the Chair and Director to ensure that our reps at the Chairs Forum vote against any further change on our no position on abortion until a full consultation has taken place in the UK and do their utmost to ensure that the Chairs Forum instructs the IEC to that affect.

The motion was carried in plenary

Working Party B: Campaigns & Action

B1: Nepal

This AGM notes

The escalating human rights crisis in Nepal, reinforced by the erosion of the rule of law, since the assumption of total executive power by King Gyanendra on 1 February 2005.

The continuing violation of international humanitarian law with impunity by both armed sides in Nepal (particularly the security forces)

The persistent risk posed to AI Nepal and other human rights defenders in such an environment.

The work carried out by AI and AIUK to defend and promote human rights in Nepal.

This AGM resolves

To condemn the restrictions on human rights in Nepal imposed since 1 February 2005

To call on the Royal Government and Maoist Rebels to uphold international law and international human rights standards in Nepal.

To support AI Nepal and other human rights defenders in Nepal by all appropriate means, including the mobilisation of AIUK's activists where necessary.

To support moves by AIUK to defend and promote human rights in Nepal, in particular international advocacy to highlight the worsening situation of human rights in the country.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in the working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

B2: Academic Freedom

This AGM is disturbed at the growing attacks on academic freedom in the UK and worldwide as a result of official 'war on terror' policies. These include enhanced surveillance and restrictive actions regarding teaching and research, communication and contacts by academics.

This AGM rejects the notion that to study, teach about or attempt to understand a phenomenon is by definition to support it.

This AGM instructs the AIUK Board to work with relevant organizations, including the unions in higher education and research, to oppose legislation which undermines academic freedom, and to defend and support academic staff who are threatened with disciplinary action by their institutions or with legal action for any legitimate action in pursuance of their work.

The proposer was not in attendance so the motion fell.

B3: Freedom of Expression

This AGM notes 2005 was a record year of loss in journalism, with 150 deaths, murders and other killings.

This AGM notes 89 of these journalists were killed in the line of duty, singled out for their professional work.

This AGM, recognising freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, **instructs** Amnesty International UK to join with the NUJ in expressing their concern at the level of violence against journalists, to campaign for governments to ensure that crimes against journalists do not remain unpunished, that all violations are properly investigated and to hold to account those who commit such acts.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in the working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

B4: Refugee & Asylum Seekers

This AGM;

- Noting the excellent work of our two staff members working on asylum issues over the past year.
- Noting that this work has focused chiefly on producing the Report on the Detention of Asylum Seekers (with subsequent government lobbying), and on research to document the fate of asylum seekers in the UK. It has not addressed the issues raised in the 2005 motion D2.
- Noting that 2005 motion D2, passed overwhelmingly at the 2005 AIUK AGM has not been implemented;
- Noting the ongoing injustices of the present UK asylum system, including the pervasive culture of disbelief at the home office;
- Noting the continuing situation in many urban communities which leaves many asylum seekers, including families, homeless and destitute;
- Noting the need for Amnesty to campaign locally across the country on an ongoing basis to increase awareness of the issues, promote tolerance and the need for a better, more humanitarian, system.

Instructs the board of AIUK to implement the 2005 motion D2 by starting an ongoing asylum seekers campaign with a dedicated coordinator in order to extend the work already being done.

The coordinator would keep local groups active and informed about the issue by generating suitable actions for them with regard to publicity and lobbying, for example;

- Campaigning against the removal of asylum seekers to countries specifically named by the UNHCR as unsafe;
- Campaigning for all asylum seekers to be granted financial support and/or work permits and access to the NHS whilst in the UK;
- Campaigning for a fairer, more just and transparent adjudication system – not least, for all asylum seekers to have unrestricted access to legal aid at all stages of their asylum claim.
- Continuing to campaign on the issue of arbitrary detention of asylum seekers in the UK, particularly the detention of families and children;
- Assisting local groups to network with local asylum seeker support groups thus providing another channel of information back to Amnesty about what is really happening in local communities.

Further instructs the Board of AIUK to report back to the membership on the progress made in implementing this resolution by the end of September 2006 via the Amnesty Journal or Groups Newsletter.

The motion was clearly carried in plenary.

B5: Removal of unsuccessful asylum seeking families from the UK

This AGM notes the recent AIUK campaign against arbitrary detention of people who have unsuccessfully claimed asylum in the UK as well as the groundbreaking “*Get it Right*” report. It also congratulates the fruitful collaboration with the Camcorder Guerrillas and making their film “*Dungavel – Monster of the Glen*” available for download.

This AGM notes and laments the removal of Indefinite Leave to Remain for those asylum seekers who have obtained refugee status in the UK, making refugee status in all cases temporary for five years and subject to review thereafter, thereby creating a barrier to integration.

This AGM also notes recurrent instances of inhumane and undignified treatment of unsuccessful asylum seekers in the UK during removal procedures, particularly during so-called “dawn-raids” on families who have sought asylum in the UK.

This AGM laments the use of handcuffs, large immigration squads in protective uniforms as well as the time and unannounced nature of removals of families as disproportionate force, particularly if children are involved. Families are thus unable to prepare their departure from home by bidding farewell and packing their belongings, while children have to watch their parents being treated like criminals.

This AGM calls on AIUK section

To publicly condemn inappropriate use of force used during removals of unsuccessful asylum seeking families,

To highlight the inhumane treatment and abuse of children’s rights as constituted during so-called “dawn-raids”

To make representations to the UK Government to consider alternative removal procedures particularly when children are involved

To campaign alongside the Scottish Parliament for the establishment of a UK wide protocol for removal procedures where children are involved which will include the involvement of children’s and educational services prior to removal to insure that children’s rights are protected and their emotional well-being is safeguarded

To support a renewed amnesty for unsuccessful asylum seeking families who have been resident in the UK for three years or more and who have at least one child in the UK education system in order to avoid upheaval of a settled child twice in his/her young life.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in working party. Motion remitted to the board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

B6: Rendition and Extraordinary Rendition

This AGM, notes the practices of Rendition and Extraordinary Rendition alleged to have been covertly undertaken by the CIA with UK concurrence, which if true is state-sponsored abduction and the deportations are contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the European Convention on Human Rights:

Welcomes the measures that AIUK has already taken to raise our concerns over anti-terrorism measures with Her Majesty's Government,

Welcomes AIUK's condemnation of the current practice of the United States of transporting suspects to foreign countries for interrogation and possible maltreatment,

Instructs AIUK to make further urgent representations expressing our concern at the apparent gross violation of the UN Convention against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of suspects by the outsourcing of interrogations and the export of torture to countries which have not signed up to the Convention and condemning the use of confessions obtained under duress for further detention and punishment.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

B7: China

This AGM notes

- The use in China of psychiatric treatment and 'mental torture' as a means of suppressing dissent, as reported in AFP on 11th August, 2002 (China Locked up Dissidents in Mental Hospitals, Soviet Style), in *The Herald* on 9th of November (My Years of Hell in a Chinese Labour Camp) and in *The Guardian* on 20th of December, 2005 (In the Grip of the Ankang).

This AGM resolves

- To actively work to uphold the rights and dignity of those suffering from the use of psychiatric and mental treatment as a means of punishment and suppressing dissent.
- To make representations to the Chinese authorities and her majesty's government, the media and others working in this field with the aim of ending this practice.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

B8: Prostitution and Trafficking

Noting that the availability of prostitution will increase if the relevant German authorities continue to license an expansion of the capacity of brothels and other similar establishments in the run up to the 2006 Football World Cup, and also noting the direct correlation between allowing more prostitution and the trafficking of women and girls into forced prostitution or sexual exploitation graphically exemplified by the recent police raid on a Birmingham massage parlour within the area covered by members of our group;

This AGM instructs the Board to investigate, raise awareness of and campaign against decisions to allow an increased capacity for prostitution linked to a likely increase in

trafficking, and also to work with other organisations in Germany campaigning on this issue.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

B9: Guantanamo Bay

This AGM congratulates AIUK for the publicity it has given to the human rights abuses suffered by the British residents detained without trial in Guantanamo Bay.

This AGM notes that the call for justice for the British residents in Guantanamo Bay is particularly urgent as many of them are on hunger strike and are being force-fed. The detainees have stated that they were subjected to “extraordinary rendition” to Guantanamo Bay and continue to suffer physical, psychological, mental, religious, sexual and racial abuse in breach of all declarations of human rights and international laws.

This AGM calls upon AIUK to continue to work for their release and to use all possible means to encourage public support for an end to their suffering and to press the US and UK Authorities to return them to their homes and families in the UK.

This AGM calls on Amnesty UK to immediately condemn the UK Government for their complacency to date, and failure to condemn the US Government for the illegal imprisonment and conditions at Guantanamo Bay, and failure to represent UK residents.

This AGM calls on the Home Office that, on the release of UK residents, to grant them the same status that was in place prior to their detention by US authorities.”

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

Working Party C: Organisation & Development

C1: Local press

Over the past twelve months there have been more than one instance where group nominees running AIUK campaigns have received insufficient information as the campaign progressed. Moreover, in one instance where a local survey was undertaken at the request of AIUK, the tie-in national information was not made in time for local press release.

This AGM therefore instructs AIUK to support local groups by reporting if there is any new information to named representatives on a monthly basis in the case of ongoing campaigns; where groups are asked to publicise a particular aspect of a campaign in the local press, the relevant information should reach the group representative as soon as possible before the date of its release to local and national papers.

The motion was carried in plenary

C2: International Friendship & Exchange

This AGM

Decides

That AIUK should, in circumstances where campaign goals can realistically be achieved and solidarity between sections and structures furthered, facilitate lateral contact between specifically targeted activists or groups in this country and abroad to further the growth and campaigning power of the movement.

Instructs the Board to

Conduct a thorough investigation, in consultation with the Student Action Network (STAN) committee and other members, into how, the above circumstances having been met, AIUK can empower members in all networks to build activism-based relationships with corresponding groups from other sections and structures, noting the key role youth and students might play in this.

Examine within this investigation a wide range of potential forms of contact, always in a spirit of equal partnership, including the eventual possibility of mutual exchanges of members between groups where this has strategic value.

Pay specific attention to ways of monitoring any such contact and exchange, to ensure that it is both to the lasting benefit of all who are involved, and a productive and efficient use of resources.

Report the findings of this investigation to the AGM in 2007.

The motion was carried in plenary

C3: Ethical Investments

This Conference believes that all organisations affiliated to all Amnesty sections should use their investments, where they have any, in furtherance of Amnesty's aims, that is the Protection of the Human.

This conference believes that investments should be made in companies that have stable and secure working environments in which employees are valued as the core element in the company's future well being. We call on affiliated organisations to look to companies to demonstrate their commitment to all their employees by reference to the appropriate International Labour Organisation conventions which cover:

- freedom from discrimination;
- freedom from bonded or forced labour;
- freedom from oppression;
- freedom from dangerous working conditions;
- freedom of association;
- the right to organise and collective bargaining;
- the right to equal remuneration, and
- the elimination of the worst forms of child labour

We call upon organisations affiliated to AIUK to expect companies, in which they invest, to work with their existing suppliers and sub-contractors to implement policies on employee rights.

We call upon organisations affiliated to AIUK to achieve these objectives through a policy of engagement and persuasion.

We recognise that it is not possible to achieve the aim of a more responsible corporate management in isolation and we wish to see progress towards the establishment of a worldwide Ethical Investment Charter.

We believe that the collective financial strength of affiliated organisations should be marshalled and encouraged to use their financial power to achieve the above objectives.

This conference therefore calls on the Board of AIUK to;

- bring the terms of the motion to the attention of AIUK affiliates using such means as the AIUK website and magazine
- jointly promote with FairPensions the existence and work of FairPensions

The motion was carried in plenary

C4: AIUK website

This AGM notes that AIUK could make better use of electronic media to promote the campaigning and fundraising work of Local Groups.

This AGM resolves to:

Provide an area of the AIUK website where Local Groups can advertise forthcoming events and activities.

To improve the navigation of the AIUK website in order to make information about campaign activities easier to find.

To make more campaign materials available online generally.

The proposer of this motion was not in attendance. The motion fell.

C5: Rapid Response

This AGM is concerned over the inflexible approach that AIUK currently takes to campaigning work.

This AGM instructs the Board to ensure that there are adequate mechanisms in place to allow for a rapid and flexible and appropriate approach to sudden changes in political and human rights situations globally.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly in working party. The motion was remitted to the Board in plenary due to lack of time for debate.

Informal Working Party D: Special Resolutions to amend the constitution

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 1: carried in plenary.

The Companies Acts 1985 and 1989

Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital

Special Resolution

of

**Amnesty International United Kingdom Section
("the Company" number: 01735872)**

The members of the Company resolved at the Annual General Meeting held on 7 – 9 April 2006 that the Company will apply for registration with the Charity Commission subject to the following special resolution being adopted with effect from either the 1st August 2006 or the Board being satisfied that all necessary conditions have been fulfilled, whichever is the earlier:

1. That the Company's Memorandum of Association be amended by:
 - (a) inserting in the place of Clause 3 the following Clause:

"To promote human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("UDHR") and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations and in regional codes of human rights which incorporate the rights contained in the UDHR and those subsequent conventions and declarations) throughout the world by all or any of the following means:

 - (a) *Monitoring abuses of human rights*
 - (b) *Obtaining redress for the victims of human rights abuse;*
 - (c) *Relieving need among the victims of human rights abuse;*
 - (d) *research into human rights issues;*
 - (e) *educating the public about human rights;*
 - (f) *providing technical advice to government and others on human rights matters;*
 - (g) *contributing to the sound administration of human rights law;*
 - (h) *commenting on proposed human rights legislation;*
 - (i) *raising awareness of human rights issues;*
 - (j) *promoting public support for human rights;*

- (k) *promoting respect for human rights among individuals, corporations and other organisations;*
- (l) *international advocacy of human rights; and*
- (m) *eliminating infringements of human rights.”*

(b) inserting in Clause 4.6 after the words “appropriate policies” the following words:

“provided that all such activities shall be conducted on the basis of well-founded, reasoned argument and shall in all other respects be confined to those which a charity registered in England & Wales may properly undertake”

(c) inserting in Clause 4.8 before the words “deal with” the following words:

“subject to any consent required by law, dispose or”

(d) inserting in Clause 4.9 before the words “borrow or raise” the following words:

“subject to any consent required by law,”

(e) inserting in Clause 4.15 before the words “raise funds by” the following words:

“subject to clause 4.16”

(f) inserting in place of Clause 8 the following clause:

“If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Company there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Company, but shall be given or transferred to Amnesty International (Charity) Limited (Company No 02007475) (Registered Charity No 294230) or failing such decision to some other charitable institution or institutions with similar objects. The institution or institutions to benefit shall be determined by the Members of the Company at or before the time of dissolution.”

2. That the Company’s Articles of Association be amended by:

(a) inserting in place of Clause 16.1 the following clause:

“Notice of general meetings shall be placed in Amnesty UK Magazine and sent to an address for the time being notified for that purpose to the Company. It shall be the responsibility of all persons entitled to receive notice of general meetings to notify the Company of change of address.”

(c) inserting in Clause 24.4 after the words “informality or irregularity” the following words:

“(including any accidental omission to give or any non-receipt of notice)”

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 2: Defeated in plenary.

The Companies Acts 1985 and 1989

Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital

Special Resolution

of

**Amnesty International United Kingdom Section
("the Company" number: 01735872)**

The members of the Company resolved at the Annual General Meeting held on 7 – 9 April 2006 that the following resolution shall be passed as a special resolution:

That the Company will apply for registration with the Charity Commission subject to the resolution to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association as set out in Resolution 1 being approved by a special resolution passed at a duly convened EGM.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 3: carried in plenary

The Companies Acts 1985 and 1989

Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital

Special Resolution

of

**Amnesty International United Kingdom Section
("the Company" number: 01735872)**

The members of the Company resolved at the Annual General Meeting held on 7 – 9 April 2006 that the following resolution shall be passed as a special resolution:

1. That the minimum age of membership of the Company shall be lowered to 14 years.
2. That the Company's Articles of Association be amended by omitting in Article 1.1.19 the words "over 16" and substituting for them the following words:

"14 or over"

3. That the Company's Articles of Association be amended by omitting in Article 1.1.21 the words "over 16" and substituting for them the following words:

"14 or over"