



## Raise Your Voice

# RAISE YOUR VOICE

## FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



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Local group's monthly mailing can be downloaded from:  
[www.amnesty.org.uk/groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups)

# Amnesty International

## GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

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### Join the General Election campaign

The Prime Minister has called a snap election for the 8<sup>th</sup> June and so we need to have a speedy response. There might not be long before election but at Amnesty International we believe that together we can ensure the next parliament works for human rights at home and abroad. This is where you and your group come in!

Imagine if all MP's elected in June knew about the people in their area who cared about human rights and knew you would be working with them to promote these values in the next parliament – this is a very powerful message.

We are asking you and your group to use the time from now until the election to raise your voice for human rights. See below for the ways you and your group can get involved.

### The General Election

The UK will hold a General Election on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017. We want to ensure the next UK government and parliament are supportive of human rights and work to protect them in the UK and internationally. During a general election, future MPs are more than ever out and about in their constituencies taking questions and setting out their positions – a perfect time to build a relationship, demonstrate your passion and human rights work, and ensure MPs have human rights on their mind when they enter Parliament.

In the run up to the election politicians will be engaging with their constituents (you) and political parties will have candidates canvassing for votes in your area. We are looking to use this opportunity to show all candidates, and thereby all the elected MPs, that Amnesty is a movement of passionate and committed members who campaign for human rights in the UK and globally and want their politicians to do the same. Now is the time to tell your next MP that you want them to represent you by raising and defending human rights in Parliament.

Amnesty activists are our movement's true strength, and this is most evident in politics. Your access to political candidates, and the future MPs, during this election will mean we can demonstrate our passion to the Parliamentarians and Government Ministers of the next five years. By finding out what your candidate priorities, interests and questions are around human rights and feeding it back to the offices, you can help the Amnesty UK movement influence UK human rights policy for the next five years and beyond.

#### **Will you raise your voice?**

At a time of global threats to human rights, now more than ever we need people to raise their voice and make themselves heard. As politicians stand for election, we are calling on our members across the UK to "raise your voice" for human rights.

#### **What will your candidates raise their voice for?**

The General Election is a fantastic opportunity to discover the human rights interests and views of your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (the people who are standing in the election in your

constituency) and ask them to use their voice both now and in Parliament to raise human rights. You can do this by:

- 1) Arranging a hustings (a public meeting for your PPCs) or invite them to an event you already have planned. It is a good idea to also invite the media to get coverage of your event in the local paper.
- 2) Attending a hustings in your constituency and asking your PPCs a question about their human rights interests
- 3) Writing to all your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) asking them about their human rights interests ([see template letter](#))
- 4) Whichever of the above three options you do, please ask your PPCs to show their support for human rights now, by Tweeting: If elected I will raise my voice for human rights - my priorities are ... #GE2017 @AmnestyNI

We have provided advice below on how to do the above. Choose whatever is best for your group and then send your feedback to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

## **Amnesty International GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

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### **How your group can get involved**

Below are suggestions of activities that your group could do to engage your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs).

One of your PPCs will be elected to be your next MP. This may be a new person, from the same or a different party than your current MP, or it may be the same MP you have had since 2015 or before. But whoever they are, a General Election is your group's chance to start building a new relationship, or solidify a current relationship, with your next MP.

There is a website called 'Your Next MP' that lists all candidates that they are aware of: <https://yournextmp.com> If you don't think they are all on this site then you should be able to get their names, addresses and telephone numbers from the local party headquarters or from the websites listed in the Annex.

Your group will probably have members living in more than one constituency. Try to cover as many constituencies as you can, but when writing to PPCs please make sure the letter/email/invitation is sent from individuals living in that constituency. If you are running an event and you have members from more than one constituency, you can invite PPCs for any constituency with members from their constituency attending.

#### **Option 1: Arrange a group event or hustings and invite your PPCs.**

A snap election means that no one has had much time to arrange events and hustings for PPCs. This means that if you can act fast, invite your PPCs, the media and spread the word, your local Amnesty group could run one of the main election events in your constituency!

Invite your PPCs to a single event, see below for guidance on who to invite and feel free to use the template invite to a hustings or template invite to a meeting we have provided. You could invite them to a group meeting, a weekend stall or an event you are already planning such as an Amnestea. You

could arrange a stunt or public campaign, or a letter writing event and invite PPCs and the local media (we've included a draft press release in Annex). Or put on a panel event/hustings with the candidates and invite the public to attend.

At the meeting tell the PPCs about the excellent work your group does, and ask them what their human rights interests and priorities are and how they would promote and protect human rights in Parliament. Don't forget to ask them to Tweet their support, for example something like: If elected I will raise my voice for human rights - my priorities are ... #GE2017 @AmnestyNI

You can download and print our [Raise Your Voice placards](#) and use them in any photos you take.

If you are holding a stall or other event to engage members of the public, you could also ask them to tweet their support for human rights by saying what they will raise their voice for – and you can do the same!

**Please remember to feedback** so your work can help us to engage better with the new parliament. Email feedback and any questions about putting on an event to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

When you have a meeting arranged **why not invite the local press?** All PPCs will be eager to get publicity through local media, so think about the best way to encourage coverage (photo opportunities etc.). If no one from the local press can make it then send them a press release (see appendix 4) and a photo from the event on the same day. Make sure the photo includes all the candidates that attended so there is no bias. If you have any questions about contacting/engaging the media you can email Laurie Hanna, [laurie.hanna@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:laurie.hanna@amnesty.org.uk) or Grainne Teggart, [grainne.teggart@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:grainne.teggart@amnesty.org.uk)

**Promote the event.** Use social media before and after your meeting, post photos and live updates from the event. Use #GE2017 and @AmnestyNI. If you take a photo, remember to tag in your PPCs or their local political party if they have a Twitter feed. Also keep an eye on popular hashtags in the run up to the election – join the current conversations and tell people why Human Rights matter to you.

### **Guidance for running a hustings**

A hustings is a meeting during the election campaign when people can ask questions of the candidates standing in their constituency. It normally takes the form of a panel debate. Below is some guidance from the electoral commission on holding a hustings – find more [here](#).

#### **To show your hustings is non-selective you should:**

- make sure that candidates or parties you invite represent a reasonable variety of view, from different parts of the political spectrum
- allow each candidate or party representative attending a fair chance to answer questions and, where appropriate, a reasonable opportunity to respond to points made against them by other candidates or party representative
- be able to give impartial reasons why you have not invited particular candidates or parties. You should be prepared to explain your reasons to candidates or parties you haven't invited
- inform the audience at the meeting of candidates or parties standing who haven't been invited or couldn't attend.

Impartial reasons may emerge from the following considerations:

- local prominence of some parties or candidates over others
- the number of elected representatives at the local or national level
- recent election results in the area
- resources and other practicalities constraining numbers of invitees
- security concerns

Impartial reasons do not include reasons such as your views on the policies of a candidate or party.

If you want advice about putting on an event or who to invite then please contact the advocacy team [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

### **Option 2: Ask your PPCs a question at a locally arranged election hustings**

If you aren't able to arrange an event yourselves, you could attend a hustings being organised in your area. Different organisations and societies in all the 650 constituencies across the UK will be running "hustings" for their local PPCs during the election campaign. A hustings is an event where your PPCs get together and answer questions on why people should vote for them to be the constituency's next MP. To find out where your hustings are check your Council website, local newspapers and newspaper website, library or even social media pages of the candidates.

Most hustings will be open to the public, so you can attend, listen to your PPCs' pitches, and even ask a question. We have provided a suggested list of human rights questions in the appendix for inspiration. Ask the PPCs what their human rights interests are and what they would campaign for in the next Parliament to promote and protect human rights.

When you have attended a hustings, send us any comments you noted down that the PPCs said at [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

Use other opportunities to **raise these issues in the media**: letters to the press (which could be an open letter to the candidates) or you could take part in phone-ins on local radio.

Please remember not to promote one candidate over others when asking questions as an Amnesty member.

If you attend a hustings you might be able to chat to the candidates after the formal event – if you do, take the opportunity to ask them to Tweet their support for human rights (see suggested Tweets above) and you could even ask if they'd be happy to have a photo taken with you that you could both use of social media. Remember to print our [Raise Your Voice placard](#) and use these in the pictures.

### **Option 3: Write to all your PPCs**

If any candidates cannot attend your event or you cannot arrange a meeting or attend a local hustings, please write to the candidates about your group and human rights.

We have drafted [a suggested letter template](#) for your group to use. We have made sure there is a lot of space in the template for you to tell your PPCs the great work you have done over the last two years and to tell them about the specific human rights campaigns you have been working on. We'd also like you to ask your PPCs about what their interests and priorities for human rights are, and we would like to collect that information centrally so that we have a better idea of the human rights interests of the next Parliament and can support you to campaign with your MP.

Feel free to amend the letter as much as you wish, but please keep the ask about what their priorities are and the ask for them to Tweet their support.

If you have any questions about the letter, are having difficulty finding the contact details of your PPCs, and/or when you receive a reply please write to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

### **Feedback, feedback, feedback**

The Amnesty NI and UK offices will be keeping a close eye on the election, but a general election is in reality 650 elections happening simultaneously! Local groups and activists are crucial in promoting human rights to their PPCs and in making sure the movement has all the necessary information to know what future MPs think about human rights. Please, therefore, send through any relevant information you learn about your PPCs and future MP through to us at [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk) or post C/O Grainne Teggart, 397 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GP. We have provided a feedback form for your use in the appendix.

After the election, the information you have gathered on your next MP will help us shape our political campaigning for the next five years. And the positive relationship you start building now will hopefully lead to a Parliament that is full of human rights prioritising MPs!

## **After the election**

Once you know who your MP will be for the next five years, it would be a great time for your group to contact them congratulating them on their election, and invite them to address the group or to a social event. New MPs will only be in Parliament until around mid-July, so any events over the summer will be conveniently timed for when MPs are back in the constituency. Start thinking about an event or public campaign you could run in late July or August now.

## **Political neutrality**

At Amnesty, we work independently and impartially to promote respect for human rights. This means Amnesty is a non-party political organisation. We campaign for political change on human rights issues but we do not side with one party over another. When representing Amnesty please be aware of this and maintain political neutrality. We will work with all MPs that are willing to engage with us. This also means that you need to engage with all PPCs standing for election in your constituency (though you don't need to invite all candidates to an event you plan, you just need to ensure your decisions are not based on political bias – see guidance on organising a hustings above).

## **How will the Lobbying Act affect your campaigning around the election?**

In January 2014, a new piece of legislation received Royal Assent. Officially it's known as the Transparency of Lobbying, non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014. Most importantly, it shouldn't stop you campaigning on any issues, including those related to an election. You don't need to change your planned campaigning over this period. Please keep calm and carry on.

When campaigning during the General Election we ask you to maintain a detailed record of all your expenditure on public activities and keep all receipts that are more than £200 in value. Please provide us with your receipts and records at the end of each month, starting end of May 2017. You can scan or photograph them and email [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk), or you can post them to: Kieran Aldred, Amnesty International UK, Human Rights Action Centre, 25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

If you receive donations – including goods or services of £500 or more in value and these are specifically for regulated campaign activity (see Lobbying Act Guidance on our UK website), then you will need to record the donor contact details and tell us straight away so that we can ensure that this is treated correctly under the new law. If you are planning on printing your own materials to use publicly on the General Election/work with PCCs, please talk to us first. This is because they may need to carry what is known as an 'imprint', stating the publisher and promoter. This is a simple procedure.

## Annex 1: Finding your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

There is a website called 'Your Next MP' that lists all candidates that they are aware of - <https://yournextmp.com/>

If you can't find all your candidates on this site (new candidates can come up regularly) then all the political parties have candidates listed on their websites (not all parties have candidates in all seats but make sure you check all that apply for your area). You may have independent candidates so if you hear about any make sure to engage with them also.

All political parties that currently have MPs in Westminster, and political parties that have come second or third in various recent local and national elections, are listed below. But please make sure to check <https://yournextmp.com> for a full list of candidates from all parties.

### National parties

- Conservative Party [https://www.conservatives.com/OurTeam/Prospective Parliamentary Candidates](https://www.conservatives.com/OurTeam/Prospective_Parliamentary_Candidates)
- The Green Party [www.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.greenparty.org.uk)
- Labour Party <http://www.labour.org.uk/index.php/home/>
- Liberal Democrat Party [http://www.libdems.org.uk/snap\\_general\\_election\\_candidates](http://www.libdems.org.uk/snap_general_election_candidates)
- UK Independence Party <http://www.ukip.org/>

### Scotland

- Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party [www.scottishconservatives.com](http://www.scottishconservatives.com)
- Scottish Greens [www.greens.scot](http://www.greens.scot)
- Scottish Labour [www.scottishlabour.org.uk](http://www.scottishlabour.org.uk)
- Scottish Liberal Democrats [www.scotlibdems.org.uk](http://www.scotlibdems.org.uk)
- Scottish National Party (SNP) [www.snp.org](http://www.snp.org)

### Wales

- Plaid Cymru <http://www2.partyof.wales/>

### Northern Ireland

- Alliance Party [www.allianceparty.org](http://www.allianceparty.org)
- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) [www.mydup.com](http://www.mydup.com)
- Green Party NI [www.greenpartyni.org](http://www.greenpartyni.org)
- Sinn Féin [www.sinnfein.ie](http://www.sinnfein.ie)
- Social Democrat and Labour Party (SDLP) [www.sdlp.ie](http://www.sdlp.ie)
- Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) [www.tuv.org.uk](http://www.tuv.org.uk)
- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) [www.uup.org](http://www.uup.org)



## Annex 2: Questions to Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

If you only have the opportunity to ask one question, let it be this one:

**“I am a member of the [area name] Amnesty International group. We campaign for the promotion and respect of human rights here in [constituency], the UK and internationally. I would like to ask what human rights issues here in the UK or around the world do you care about and how will you use your voice in Parliament to champion human rights?”**

Please note down all the PPCs’ answers and send them through to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

If you have a meeting or event with PPCs where you have more time for questions, we would suggest these from [our manifesto recommendations](#):

- Will you ensure human rights are prioritised and protected throughout and beyond the process of leaving the EU?
- Will you defend UK human rights protections, including the Human Rights Act and our membership of the European Convention on Human Rights?
- Will you protect the rights of people seeking asylum in the UK and elsewhere?
- Will you promote a UK foreign policy that champions human rights?
- Will you work to ensure responsible UK arms controls which protect human rights?
- Will you call for the rights of women and girls to be put front and centre of government policy?

If you would like more information on these questions, see [our manifesto for human rights](#).

Also feel free to ask your PPCs about human rights issues your group has been campaigning on. Telling your PPCs what you care about and how you have used your voice to make a difference will be more impactful. If you want the latest up-to-date information on the campaign you’re working on, or would like help crafting a question around it for PPCs please write to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

Please send any information about your PPCs’ views through to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)

### Annex 3: Feedback form

Amnesty group and contact (name and email)	
Group twitter handle	
Constituency	
Candidates' names and political party	
Where met (meeting, other hustings, bumped into them on the street...). If sent a letter and received a reply please enclose copies.	
What human rights issues or concerns did the candidates raise?	
Anything else	

Please send the answers to the above to [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk) or post C/O Grainne Teggart, 397 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GP

**Annex 4: Template press release – this is based around the candidates attending a hustings or other event.**

**Amnesty International: [INSERT GROUP NAME]**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [INSERT DATE]**

**[INSERT TOWN] AMNESTY GROUP CALLS ON [INSERT AREA]'S NEXT MP TO RAISE THEIR VOICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

Amnesty International's [INSERT TOWN] group today called on local parliamentary candidates to raise human rights issues in Parliament should they be elected as MP.

Candidates gathered in [INSERT PLACE] to meet with local Amnesty group members and to discuss the importance of human rights issues after the election.

[PLEASE INSERT SOME OF THE LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IF APPROPRIATE]

[INSERT NAME], who lives in [INSERT AREA] and is the chair of the [INSERT TOWN] Amnesty group, said:

“Amnesty members in [INSERT AREA] regularly campaign for the protection and respect of human rights in the UK and around the world.

“We want our next MP to also raise their voice in Westminster to champion human rights that are important to us here at home.

“We were delighted that prospective candidates joined us today to discuss human rights issues and listen to our concerns. We look forward to working with our next MP to ensure human rights issues remain high on the agenda after the election.”

**ENDS**

For more information and pictures, please contact [INSERT REGIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT OFFICER'S CONTACT DETAILS, INCLUDING A MOBILE NUMBER]