



# RAISE YOUR VOICE

## FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



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## **Join the General Election campaign**

The Prime Minister has called a snap Westminster election for the 8<sup>th</sup> June and so we need to have a speedy response. There might not be long before the election, but at Amnesty International in Scotland we believe that we can ensure the next UK 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 across 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 all the main 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 International in Scotland 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 Westminster Parliamentarians and Government Ministers of the next five years. By finding out what your candidates priorities, interests and questions are around human rights and feeding it back to the central office, you can help the Amnesty movement influence UK human rights policy for the next five years and beyond.

Although a lot of domestic human rights issues are devolved to Holyrood, Westminster is still important for UK and global human rights issues, such as business deals, the arms trade and foreign policy. Although Scottish MPs won't always be involved with non-Scottish issues in Westminster, they do hold a lot of influence in the key areas mentioned above – so it is important that we build our relationship with them.

## Amnesty International in Scotland

# GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

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### 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, Amnesty is calling on people across the UK to “raise your voice” for human rights. If you run an event in your area, ask people what they are going to raise their voice for during the next five years. Get them to tweet or share “I will raise my voice for...”, or even collect these ideas and present them to your newly elected MP in June to show them what their constituents’ priorities are.

### 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 (PPCs) (all the people who are standing in the election in your constituency) and ask them to use their voice in the Westminster 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 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 @AmnestyScotland**

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

## How your group can get involved

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. Please make sure to write to/invite only PPCs from your own constituency. Try to cover as many constituencies as you can, as this means more future MPs find out about their local group! 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: Ask your PPCs a question at a locally arranged election hustings**

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 all the 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 Annex 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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk)

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

### **Option 2: Arrange a group event or hustings and invite all your PPCs.**

A snap election means that no one had much time to arrange events and hustings for PPCs. This means 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 all your PPCs to a single event – see page 7 guidance on arranging a hustings. You could invite them to a group meeting, a weekend stall or an event you are already planning such as a AmnesTea.

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You could arrange a stunt or public campaign, or letter writing event and invite PPCs and the local media (we've included a draft press release in Annex 4). Or put on a panel event/hustings with the candidates and invite the public to attend.

At the meeting tell the PPCs about the work of your group, and ask them what their human rights interests and priorities are and how they would promote and protect human rights in Westminster.

**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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk)

When you have a meeting arranged **why not invite the local press?** If no one from the local press can make it then send them a press release (see Annex 4) and a photo from the event on the same day. Make sure the photo includes all the candidates so there is no bias.

**If you need support contacting media in Scotland or on using social media, email:**  
[Pauline.kelly@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:Pauline.kelly@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 **@AmnestyScotland** 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.

### **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.

There is a suggested letter template for your group to complete and send on the [resources page](#). 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 and to tell them about the specific human rights campaigns you have been working on. There is an ask to the 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.

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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk)

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

Amnesty offices across the UK 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 PPC 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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk) or post C/O Kieran Aldred 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

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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 International in Scotland 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 in Scotland 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.

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

In January 2017, 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 from 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](#)), 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.

### **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:**

- 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.
- 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
- 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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk)

## **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 you 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 in Scotland, are listed below. But please make sure to check <https://yournextmp.com> for a full list of candidates from all parties.

### Scottish parties

- 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)

### UK parties

- Conservative Party [www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com)
- Labour Party [www.labour.org.uk](http://www.labour.org.uk)
- Liberal Democrat Party [www.libdems.org.uk/snap\\_general\\_election\\_candidates](http://www.libdems.org.uk/snap_general_election_candidates)
- UK Independence Party [www.ukip.org/](http://www.ukip.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], in Scotland and internationally. I would like to ask what human rights issues here in Scotland 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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@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 UK government policy?

If you would like more information on these questions, our Scottish manifesto for human rights is included on the [resource page](#).

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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk)

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

**Amnesty International in Scotland**  
**GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

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**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 [mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk) or post C/O Kieran Aldred  
Amnesty International 17 – 25 New Inn Yard London EC2A 3EA

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

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

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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

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

Amnesty International in Scotland's [INSERT TOWN] Group today called on all local parliamentary candidates to raise human rights issues in Westminster should they be elected as an 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 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 Scotland and around the world.

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

“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 CONTACT DETAILS INCLUDING A MOBILE NUMBER OR [Pauline.Kelly@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:Pauline.Kelly@amnesty.org.uk) 07818 453070