

Introduction to Amnesty International

Notes to accompany Powerpoint

About this presentation

The presentation is designed for school speakers and teachers to introduce human rights and the campaigning work of Amnesty International. Amnesty International is a non-governmental organisation standing up for human rights in order to protect people wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.

It is aimed at a secondary school audience (11+), contains 15 slides and is designed to take around 15 – 20 minutes.

You can add or delete slides but cannot modify the slides present. You can adapt the script according to audience and time; it is written for delivery in an assembly-type setting but could also be used as an introduction to a classroom session about human rights or the work of an NGO

Further resources:

- find Amnesty International's latest educational resources at www.amnesty.org.uk/education or order via our telephone line 0178854553, requesting our resource catalogue ED143/2
- find current information about Amnesty International's campaigns at www.amnesty.org.uk

Slide 1

Introduction: Introduce Amnesty and the purpose of the presentation – you may wish to include the following:

- Ask students to raise their hands if they have heard of Amnesty International.
- Inform students that Amnesty International is a global organisation with more than 2.8 million members, with supporters in over 150 countries of the world. Its membership in the UK includes 530 youth groups and 112 student groups in universities (2013 figures).
- State that Amnesty International is a global campaigning organisation that is independent of any government. Its members believe that everybody has certain rights just because we are human. Amnesty campaigns to make sure that people's rights are not abused and where they are abused, to make sure that something is done about it.
- The picture shows students at the Student Conference 2012, campaigning for women's rights in Afghanistan.

Slide 2

We all have rights because we are human 



MY RIGHTS PASSPORT
THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

 We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.

Everyone has the right to an education.

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for...health and well-being.

We all have rights because we are human: you may wish to inform students of the following -

- There is an amazing agreement between different countries of the world. It is called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was written after the horrors of World War II
- The aim of this declaration is to ensure that all people, whatever their race, religion, gender or any other difference, live in freedom and dignity
- The declaration aims to protect people from torture, abuse and injustice by establishing basic rights
- Some examples of human rights are given on the slide, which you can read aloud to the students or ask them to find in their passports
- You can ask students to find examples of other rights in their passports
- More about the Universal Declaration: it is not a law, but many laws have been created because of it, such as The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has inspired the work of organisations such as Amnesty.
- Unfortunately, despite the Universal Declaration, human rights abuse is rife. Thousands of people across the world are denied a fair trial and many are imprisoned purely because of what they think or believe. The death penalty is still used for some crimes in 58 countries around the world (2012). Civilians are still targeted in times of war: children are forced to become soldiers and women and girls are raped. Torture still happens. Millions of people still live in poverty on less than 1 dollar a day.
- You may wish to distribute copies of My Rights Passports, product code ED112 or have these available for students to pick up at the end of the session

Slide 3



The Amnesty Candle: you could inform / ask students the following:

- Amnesty exists to ensure everyone enjoys all the rights laid out in the UDHR and to put an end to human rights abuses everywhere in the world.
- You may have noticed the candle symbol on the slides you have seen so far. This is Amnesty International's symbol. What do you think it means? [Prompts: Why would you use a candle? What could the barbed wire represent?] [Answer: The candle represents light and hope in the dark, and the barbed wire represents prison and persecution.]
- Amnesty's motto comes from an ancient Chinese proverb: 'It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness.' What do you think that could mean? [Answer: Even when it seems there are many problems to be solved, it is better to do something than just to complain about it.]

Slide 4

Ignatius Mahendra Kusuma Wardhana 



Mahendra's human rights have been abused...


...Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression...




Ignatius Mahendra Kusuma Wardhana: Introduce students to a case of human rights abuse, you may wish to share the following information –

- In Indonesia in 2003, a student leader called Mahendra, *[pronounced Ma- HEN-dra] then aged 21, was found guilty of ‘insulting the President or Vice President’ after participating in a peaceful demonstration against fuel price increases.
- He was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment.
- Amnesty International considered Mahendra to be a prisoner of conscience. Prisoners of conscience are people who have not used or called on others to use violence, and who are imprisoned for what they believe, for something they say, or for who they are.
- Young people from schools and universities, and local group members and others across the UK sent greetings cards to Mahendra while he was in prison as part of an annual Amnesty campaign in which people send a friendly greeting or message of solidarity to someone who is in danger or unjustly imprisoned.
- Mahendra has always been a courageous, strong activist and when he saw the support he had through the greetings cards, and noticed that the guards were treating him more carefully, he felt brave enough to start campaigning inside the prison.
- He started a petition among the prisoners for free access to clean water - they had previously had to pay for this. His campaign succeeded.
- He says the cards were important because he knew that he was not a criminal, and it was important to him that other people believed that too.
- While in prison, Mahendra also wrote to other victims of human rights abuse that were featured in Amnesty’s writing campaign.
- You can inform students that at the end of the presentation you will update them with what happened to Mahendra.


Slide 5

Khun Kwario




Khun Kwario's human rights have been abused...

.....No one shall be to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment...



Khun Kwario: Introduce students to another case of human rights abuse, you may wish to include the following information:

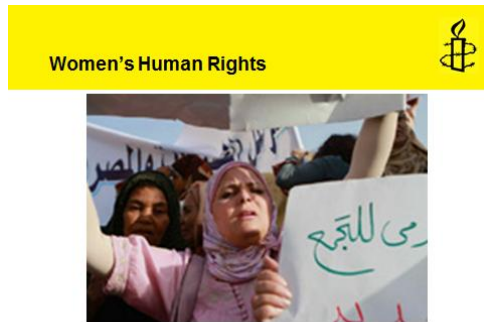
- Khun Kawrio, a young man in Burma, was a member of a political group Kayan New Generation Youth. The Kayan are an ethnic minority in Burma.
- The government of Burma were holding a referendum on a new constitution, which people feared would increase the powers of the military. Alongside others, Khun Kwario organised a peaceful campaign which encouraged people to vote NO in the country's referendum.
- The campaigners spray painted No on buildings and released balloons and paper boats
- For taking part in this he was detained and not given access to legal representation or a fair trial.
- Khun Kwario was interrogated for 15 days during which time he was tortured. He was beaten with sticks, kicked and forced to kneel on stones. His mouth was taped up to stop him screaming and a plastic bag was put over his head. He was also made to lie in the sun for several hours at a time in temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius.
- He was also subjected to a torture technique that involved simulated drowning, in which he was forced to inhale water. As a result of getting water in his lungs, Khun Kawrio suffered from ill-health and respiratory problems for several months afterwards, and was denied medical treatment.
- He was sentenced to 37 years in prison in 2008.
- You can Inform students that at the end of the presentation you will update them as to what happened to Khun Kwario.

Slide 6

Poverty and Human Rights: you can inform students of some of the following

- As well as campaigning for the rights of individuals, Amnesty also runs international campaigns on issues affecting millions of people – for example, poverty and human rights.
- The illustration shows an on-going campaign in the Niger Delta of Africa, where millions of people in the Niger Delta in Africa have seen their lives and livelihoods destroyed by oil extraction, and the oil company with the biggest stake in the area is Shell.
- Shell's half-century of oil extraction has poisoned rivers, mangrove swamps and farming lands, and impoverished whole communities that depend on these natural resources for their survival. Water pollution has killed the fish.
- All companies have a responsibility to respect human rights in their operations
- Shell has failed to meet its legal obligation to clean up its pollution; it has even failed to meet its own business principles.
- Young people around the UK have been writing letters and sending emails to Shell's Chief Executive Officer, asking for the company to account for the lack of respect they are showing towards human rights.

Slide 7



Women's Human Rights: you might want to share the following with students –

(refer to www.amnesty.org.uk/women for the most up-to-date information about Amnesty's work with women's rights)

- Simply being born female can mean automatic disadvantage. Women and girls are still fighting for the most basic right of control over their own bodies and their own lives. Women face discrimination and violence at the hands of the state, the community and the family.
- In 2013, around the world, women are:
 - Missing: More than 100 million women are missing from the world's population - a result of discrimination against women and girls, including female infanticide.
 - Illiterate: Two thirds of the 774 million adult illiterates worldwide are women - the same proportion for the past 20 years and across most regions.
 - Forced into marriage: More than 60 million girls worldwide are forced into marriage before the age of 18
 - Dying in pregnancy and childbirth: Each year 358,000 women die from pregnancy and childbirth-related causes.
- This picture shows women in Egypt protesting about their lack of rights and demanding change.
- Amnesty campaigns for human rights alongside women's rights defenders around the world – the first slide on this presentation showed Amnesty student members campaigning to support women's rights defenders in Afghanistan.

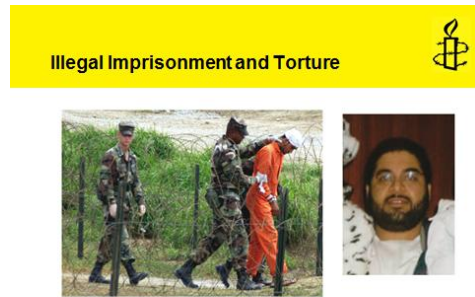
Slide 8



End the Death Penalty: you may wish to share some of the following with students (figures obtained from the 2012 Amnesty International Report, Death Sentences and Executions – unless otherwise stated)

- Amnesty International campaigns for total abolition of the death penalty.
- There is no evidence that it is a stronger deterrent against crime than custodial sentences.
- In 2012 only 1 in 10 countries worldwide carried out death sentences; 1722 people were given death sentences; there was at least a total of 23,386 people under sentence of death worldwide.
- In some countries, such as Iran and Iraq, death sentences are handed down following ‘confessions’ that have been obtained using torture – defendants have described being beaten with cables and subjected to electric shocks
- In 2012, the following methods of execution were used: beheading; hanging; lethal injection and shooting.
- At least two people were executed in Yemen in 2012 for crimes that may have been committed when they were under 18.
- Since 1973, 138 death row prisoners have been released from death row in the USA on the grounds of innocence (as of 2011). But the USA continues to execute: in 2011, despite huge doubts about the case, a man called Troy Davis was executed using lethal injection in Georgia USA. Davis had been on death row for over 20 years - since being convicted of the killing of an off-duty policeman called Mark Allen MacPhail. He had always protested his innocence and there was no physical evidence linking him to the crime. Amnesty International had campaigned, along with other organisations that there was far too much doubt around the case.
- You might wish to read out Troy’s last words:

“I’d like to address the MacPhail family. I’d like to let you all know... I am innocent. I did not have a gun that night. I did not shoot your family member. But I am so sorry for your loss. I really am – sincerely. All that I can ask is that each of you look deeper into this case, so that you really will finally see the truth. I ask to my family and friends that you all continue to pray, that you all continue to forgive. Continue to fight this fight. For those about to take my life, may God have mercy on your souls. God bless you all.”

Slide 9

Illegal Imprisonment and Torture: you might wish to share some of the following with students –

- Amnesty believes that whenever people are accused of a crime, they should be given a fair trial.
- This does not always happen, for example, in the case of people detained at the US military base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.
- Since 2001, the US authorities have illegally detained more than 700 people they suspect of terrorist activity, holding them at Guantánamo Bay.
- Their detention is illegal under international law because they have not been given fair trials.
- Many people have been released from Guantánamo Bay without charge, but 116 are still there (September 2013)
- The slide shows guards escorting a prisoner in Guantanamo bay and the small photograph is of Shaker Aamer, a UK resident detained at Guantánamo Bay. His wife and children live in the UK. He has never been charged with any crime and he is still imprisoned there despite repeated calls for his release.
- Amnesty members have been campaigning for Shaker Aamer and asking the UK government to intervene on his behalf.

Slide 10

Control Arms: you may wish to share some of the following:

- Every minute that passes someone loses their life to armed violence or conflict.
- We accept regulations for most traded goods – but guns have had fewer trade regulations than bananas.
- An out-of-control arms trade fuels human rights abuses: guns get to the hands of warlords, dictators and those forcibly recruiting child soldiers and hundreds of thousands of people suffer violence, injury and loss of life.
- Amnesty has been pressing for better international regulation of the arms trade.

Slide 11

Campaigning for Human Rights: the picture shows members of the Amnesty Student group campaigning for an arms treaty at the Foreign Office in 2012. You may wish to share some of the following methods that Amnesty supporters use to defend human rights:

- Write letters and send emails and cards of support to individuals who are at risk or in prison
- Write letters and send petitions to governments and organisations to demand change;
- Make visits to MPs and government ministers to lobby directly for change (as the picture shows)
- Use Facebook, Twitter and blogs to encourage people to take action
- Write letters to newspapers and produce films to raise awareness and encourage action
- Use demonstrations and protests to raise awareness (for example Eastlea Youth Group campaigning to end stoning, as shown in the film I Talk Out Loud – available online at www.amnesty.org.uk/education)
- Some of Amnesty's more famous supporters help by talking about Amnesty's campaigns to the media and taking part in Amnesty events such as comedy gigs, concerts and public talks. In the past they have included Keira Knightley, Miley Cyrus and Coldplay to name a few.
- Through books, films, magazines, educational materials, resources for schools and school and university talks, Amnesty tries to raise awareness and encourage people like us to take action for human rights.

Slide 12

Does Amnesty Work? 



Does Amnesty Work? You might wish to share some of the following:

- In many of the cases Amnesty works on, there is some improvement: torture is stopped, a prisoner who was unfairly imprisoned is released. Often it is difficult to know exactly what difference campaigning has made, because there are so many other things that influence decisions. But sometimes Amnesty hears that actions have had a direct impact, and these times are cause for celebration.
- Remember Mahendra and Khun Kwario? Here's what happened to them

Mahendra

- As well as sending Mahendra greetings cards, Amnesty supporters wrote to the Indonesian government asking for his release.
- Mahendra was finally released in August 2005 after being imprisoned for two and a half years.
- On his release he told Amnesty the conditions and the food were terrible, but also that prison was 'a very lonely place'. He said that the letters he received from Amnesty members were a great comfort: 'We knew from the letters that many people were supporting us and that we were not forgotten.'
- After Mahendra's release, there was a landmark change in the Criminal Code in Indonesia in December 2006. The Constitutional Court voted to change part of the law under which Mahendra had been imprisoned. So 'insulting the President or Vice-President' is no longer a crime

Khun Kwario

- Amnesty campaigned on his case and in July 2012, Khun Kwario was released as part of a wider prisoner amnesty.
- On his release, Khun Kwario thanked everybody that has supported him. "Thank you all so much, I will keep working for democracy and human rights development in Burma and in the Kayan region. I hope to meet you all personally some time; I want to send best regards to you all."

Slide 13

Campaign Success: You might wish to share the following information about success in the control arms campaign:

- On 2 April 2013 we achieved a great milestone for human rights. 154 governments voted to put lives and human rights above profits and for the first time place effective international controls on the billion dollar arms trade. They voted to adopt the Arms Trade Treaty for which Amnesty had been campaigning for over two decades.
- Young campaigners played a really important part in the success of this campaign. On two occasions Amnesty youth and student activists visited the Foreign Office and lobbied ministers to take action to secure a treaty (as seen in the previous picture on slide 11).

Slide 14

But human rights are still abused today





HYPERLINK to Nolwandle's Story – 3 minutes
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7n1Ks3exko>

But human rights are still abused today: the picture shows women in Zimbabwe from the group WOZA – Women of Zimbabwe Arise, who campaign to defend human rights in Zimbabwe. You may wish to share some of the following information:

- For many years life has been difficult for the people of Zimbabwe in Africa. Many people live in fear of what the government or the police will do to them. Many people have been beaten up or killed for speaking out or voting against the government
- Ten years ago a group of women decided that they needed to do something to make life better. They started Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) to stand up for their rights and freedoms and fight for a better future for their children.
- Members of WOZA started holding peaceful demonstrations for freedom and justice, but they were often beaten by the police for protesting. They also have been imprisoned, and sometimes have not been allowed food, medical care or legal help.
- Despite the human rights abuses they face, WOZA members continue to show great courage in their struggle to defend their rights.
- Every year on Valentine's Day WOZA holds a peaceful demonstration for human rights and hand out roses. In 2013 181 WOZA Members were arrested during this event.
- Amnesty fears that attacks on WOZA may continue or even increase.
- You could show students the three minute animation *Nolwandle's Story*, on the hyperlink (published by AIUK 2013). Inform students that this animation tells the true story of Nolwandle – a member of WOZA. The animation includes a description of police violence, so we recommend that this is shown to students aged 14+ and that you check the content with a teacher prior to the session.

Slide 15

How can you get involved? 



www.amnesty.org.uk/youth
www.amnesty.org.uk/student

TOGETHER WE ARE POWERFUL
(hyperlink to film)

How can you get involved? You may wish to share some of the following information -

- There are lots of ways that we can all get involved with Amnesty.
- You can take action either as an individual or as part of a group and join campaigns in all the ways discussed earlier, including organising fun events, writing letters, running school assemblies, making films or getting in your local paper.
- You can find out how to start or join a group using the web addresses on the slide
 - There is a short film to finish (You Are Powerful)
 - You may also wish to distribute copies of Youth Starting Out Guide (YA 383) to teachers / students so that they have more information about Youth Groups.