
Amnesty International

MONTHLY ACTION

ACTIVISM TEAM, Amnesty International UK
HRAC, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA



April 2015

KEEP THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

To protect human rights in the UK, right now we need to protect the Human Rights Act.

Negative press coverage of human rights and calls for the Act to be scrapped have led some politicians to think that limiting our rights would be a popular move. At least one political party has drawn up plans to replace the Act, redefining which rights are protected and who is entitled to them.

Opportunity – a very local national campaign

The 2015 election will see a series of critical localised battles right across the UK. Campaigns in London and Brighton will be as different from one another as the campaigns in Manchester and Sheffield, or Glasgow and Edinburgh.

With our wide and powerful activist network this presents a real opportunity for us to:

- Craft the human rights debate into an issue that can begin to win public support for the Human Rights Act – and for human rights in general.
- Speak to different parts of the country with more targeted stories on human rights that relate to people and their communities through the UK.

We need to show that people in the UK care about human rights and will fight to defend the Human Rights Act. Your group can help to do this by:

- Ensuring that people in your area understand how the Human Rights Act protects them
- Telling your parliamentary candidates why human rights and the Human Rights Act are important to you.

The Human Rights Act gives us the power to challenge the decisions of government and public authorities. It's not only about fair treatment by the courts and police. It's also about our rights to dignity and equality in hospitals and care homes, to freedom from mass surveillance, and to a safe home if we're vulnerable.

The fuel for the campaign will come from the passion of our local activists in different parts of the country and their power to influence local media. The Human Rights Act is there for everyone, and one of the best ways to talk about it locally and for you to win support for the Act is to focus on issues that are important to your community. Some might find it helps to talk about cases where the Act has helped elderly couples stay together, others about those where it has helped improve care for the disabled, or others might look to how it sets an example for international human rights struggles. However, all campaigns will carry Amnesty's core message on human rights to ensure the activity remains part of the wider campaign.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

The general election provides us with an opportunity to win public support and send a strong message to politicians, so please act as soon as possible.

1. Letter to local media

Studies have shown that people care more about their local media - MPs and others pay great attention and are swayed by local media coverage. Our own research shows that human rights stories tend to be covered more positively by local media than the national press, however local newspapers often carry negative letters about human rights / the HRA.

Attached is our template media letter. Please adapt it to reflect any human rights issues affecting people in your area and send it to your local paper. If you need contacts for local publications or advice on dealing with the press, contact Harriet on 020 7033 1549 and by e-mail at harriet.garland@amnesty.org.uk

2. Digital and social media

Take action at www.amnesty.org.uk/keeptheact (from 2 April) and spread the message far and wide. We'll email Amnesty supporters soon about how to share the campaign with friends, family and colleagues.

3. Contact your prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs)

If you haven't done it already, contact your PPC and ask to meet them. You can ask them what they think about the Human Rights Act and about torture (we're raising both issues during the general election). To find out more, go to www.amnesty.org.uk/election

Don't forget to feed back

Please tell the Local Groups Office what you're doing so that we can see how well the campaign is going and share information with other activists.

RESOURCES:

Below are resources that you can use for your action. They can be ordered from Supporter Care Team by contacting them on 020 7033 1675 or by e-mail at activism@amnesty.org.uk

Stickers: 2 designs – Pink background with black text 'Do the Human Right Thing', and black background with pink text 'Keep the Human Rights Act'.

Badges: 2 designs – Pink heart with text 'Human Rights', and black background with text 'I (heart symbol) Human Rights'.

Posters: A4 poster with the pictures of the 8 party leaders.

CONTENTS

- The guidance sheet
- Letter to local media
- The Human Rights Act briefing
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GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?

If you have any queries about this action please contact:
activism@amnesty.org.uk
Local group's monthly mailing can be downloaded from:
www.amnesty.org.uk/groups