



LOBBYING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Scottish Independence Referendum 2014

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INTRODUCTION

The referendum on Scotland's independence will take place on 18 September 2014.

Amnesty International has no position on whether people should vote 'yes' or 'no'. But we do have a position on human rights being central to whichever path is chosen. This important decision on Scotland's constitutional future should be guided by fundamental considerations about what kind of society we want to live in. Some of the key issues of the referendum debate have been the economy, the currency and the EU. Now Amnesty wants to make human rights part of that debate.

Across the country, people are reflecting on the options open to them, and imagining different futures. This gives us an unprecedented opportunity to promote the values we share as members of Amnesty International. Protecting and promoting human rights – both at home and abroad – is key to building a better future, whatever the outcome of the independence vote.

We hope you will play your part in raising the profile of human rights in the referendum campaign by ensuring human rights issues are on the agenda of politicians and campaigners on both sides of the constitutional debate.

Amnesty's Scotland office has produced a campaign document to inform the debate – *The Rights Referendum*. It sets out the current human rights landscape in Scotland, and identifies four key themes for the campaign. A series of events will promote this document and the themes. For event details and updates check www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland.

This briefing describes the four key campaign themes and gives ideas for how you can help to get Amnesty International's voice heard in this historic debate.

FEEDBACK AND QUERIES

Do contact us for support on events and media work. Please also feed back about your meetings and events.

For media and events support, contact:

Pauline Kelly, Media and Campaigns Officer
pauline.kelly@amnesty.org.uk, tel: 0131 718 6687

For advocacy issues (eg contact with MPs, MSPs and 'Yes' and 'Better Together' representatives, plus attending and organising meetings), contact

Julie Hepburn, Advocacy and Education Officer
julie.hepburn@amnesty.org.uk, tel: 0131 718 6685

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CAMPAIGN THEMES

The four key themes of Amnesty's referendum campaign, set out below, are described in more detail in *The Rights Referendum* document. Please use these themes to question representatives on both sides of the referendum debate on their attitudes and commitment to human rights issues.



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1. The commitment to human rights

a willingness to be bound by an international and regional framework of human rights.



Glasgow © Getty Images

2. The reality of human rights

a commitment to make basic rights such as an adequate standard of living, housing, and social security, enforceable.



Syria © AP

3. The world of human rights

a desire to play a strong role in enhancing the recognition of human rights internationally.



Migrant workers, Qatar © Al

4. The business of human rights

a commitment to use Scotland's economic, as well as political, interests to advance human rights internationally.

WHAT GROUPS CAN DO

The most effective action members can take is to ask questions at every opportunity. The more our politicians and campaigners are asked about human rights, the higher up their agenda our priorities will go. Here are a few ideas.

TAKE PART IN THE ONLINE ACTION

The main action we are asking all Amnesty members to take is to contact local MSPs and MPs via our website. We have set up an online tool to make this as easy as possible. Visit www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland to email your local representatives direct.

The email asks politicians to show their support for human rights, and our four campaign themes, by having their picture taken with our poster *Scotland Stands for Human Rights*.

We will send a copy of our campaign leaflet (which opens out as the *Scotland Stands for Human Rights* poster) to all of Scotland's parliamentarians to highlight the campaign.

Members are Amnesty's greatest strength. So please use your influence by taking part in the website action and encouraging other members and supporters to do the same.

CONTACT YOUR MSPS AND MPS DIRECT

Write to your local elected representatives to ask them to support Amnesty's campaign themes, or meet with them individually at their local surgeries. Take an Amnesty poster with you to any meeting, as they may be happy to have their picture taken at the time. Please email pictures to pauline.kelly@amnesty.org.uk.

INVITE SPEAKERS TO YOUR GROUP MEETING

Invite representatives from 'Yes' and 'Better Together' to speak at one of your local group meetings. As Amnesty does not have a position on what the outcome of the referendum should be, it is important to invite speakers from both sides of the debate.

ATTEND PUBLIC MEETINGS

Both the 'Yes' and 'Better Together' campaigns are holding regular public meetings across Scotland. Please attend and make Amnesty's voice heard. Tell them that human rights matter to you, and ask them to support Amnesty's campaign themes.

CHALLENGE CAMPAIGNERS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

If a 'Yes' or 'Better Together' campaigner knocks on your door, talk about how human rights matter to you and tell them about Amnesty's campaign themes.

ORGANISE AN AMNESTY REFERENDUM EVENT

If you are interested in organising a local referendum event, please contact Amnesty's Scotland office so that dates can be coordinated with planned national events. You will also need guidance on protocol in a referendum, which differs from standard elections. Email julie.hepburn@amnesty.org.uk for further information.

PUBLICISE AMNESTY'S CAMPAIGN

Write to your local newspapers (print and online) and use social media to publicise Amnesty's referendum campaign. See the sections on the next page on 'Working with the media' and 'Using social media' for further ideas and guidance.

Referendum campaign contact details:

Yes Scotland
136 Hope Street
Glasgow
G2 2TG
Call: 0141 221 4767
Email: info@yesscotland.net
Website: www.yesscotland.net

Better Together
5 Blythswood Square
Glasgow
G2 4AD
Call: 0141 225 6288
Website: www.bettertogether.net

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

USING NEWSPAPERS

A good way to make your voice heard is to write a letter to the editor of your local paper or any of the national daily or Sunday papers in Scotland. You can do this to draw attention to specific human rights issues which you feel are being ignored, to raise concerns about the human rights implications of proposals that are being put forward, or to encourage other people to do the same.

Below is a sample letter to the editor. Please contact Pauline Kelly (see p2) for help writing letters and for more examples. Please send us a copy of any letters you have printed.

Dear Editor

Your story on the Eastleigh by-election in the Metro yesterday (Monday 4 March) contained reference to justice secretary Chris Grayling calling for a 'dramatically curtailed role' for the European Court of Human Rights and, by extension, an end to the Human Rights Act.

This may not seem to have very much relevance to Scotland's citizens but events such as this should be viewed through the lens of the Scottish referendum on independence. The protection of human rights is built into Scotland's judicial processes with the embedding of the Human Rights Act in the Scotland Act. Would an independent Scotland retain and extend human rights protections? What would the position be if the vote result was 'No'?

These are big questions and the issue is something Amnesty International in Scotland will be examining closely as we draw nearer to the referendum. We encourage people to write to or tweet their MSPs to ask for clarification of their views and commitments.

Yours

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media like Twitter and Facebook are great tools that can help you spread the word, recruit new members, get the latest news and share our campaign action. They are worth investing time and energy in. Whatever social media tools you use there are some rules you should follow.

- **Be transparent:** feel free to say who you are and what you believe in. Be clear about your role as an activist but also be clear that your views are your own.
- **Be yourself:** let your personality come out through your engagement with social media. Use common sense. If your post gives you cause to hesitate before posting, then don't post.
- **Be aware:** there are people known as 'trolls' who are waiting to start arguments on social media. Either ignore them or thank them for their comment and move on.

GETTING STARTED

If your group is using Twitter or Facebook for the first time, see our digital guidance *How to communicate online* at www.amnesty.org.uk/socialresources. This tells you how to set yourself up and how to use the tools. There are also top tips for getting the most out of them.

USING TWITTER TO LOBBY

You can use Twitter to contact your MSPs and MPs direct. You could thank them for attending a meeting, comment on an opinion they have expressed or draw their attention to our campaign.

Find the Twitter address for the politicians you want to contact. For example, the address for Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, is @stratearnrose.

Example:

@stratearnrose Thanks for attending @Amnesty #IndyRef event in Dundee. We look forward to hearing your thoughts about human rights in the Referendum.

Example:

@AlexSalmond – We at xxAmnesty Group would like to hear your views on our Rights Referendum campaign[LINK TO WEBSITE]

For a full list of MPs on twitter, see <http://tweetminster.co.uk/mps> and if you have a twitter account, you can access the Scottish Parliament list on <http://twitter.com/ScotParl/lists/msps>

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