

Freshers' Fair Guide 2012



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Intro:

Your freshers' fair stall is a great opportunity to recruit new members and get some important campaigning work done.



This leaflet has been designed to help you use the materials we have sent you to the greatest effect.

VERY IMPORTANT!
**MAKE SURE YOUR STALL IS BOOKED
AND YOU HAVE CONFIRMATION.**

If you need further support, your friendly Freshers team are here to help you!

You can contact Karina, Ben and Catherine by email: freshers@amnesty.org.uk
or on facebook: www.facebook.com/amnesty.activista

Alternatively, you can call our Supporter Care team on 0207 033 1596

You can also download pdfs of all our Freshers resources from our website:

www.amnesty.org.uk/freshers

1. Freshers' pack materials and what to do with them!

For decoration

- **Balloons:** put these up by your stall to make it look eye catching.
- **Amnesty Banner & posters:** don't forget blu-tac and pins!
- **Small 'Protect the Human' placards**

Things to hand out

- **Next meeting postcards:** fill in the details of your first meeting and hand out to people who are interested in attending
- **AIUK Q & A:** give to people who want to know more about Amnesty; useful for answering tricky questions. (Tip: keep a couple back to photocopy in case you run out)
- **'Join Us' leaflets:** these leaflets explain all the ways students can get involved in Amnesty International
- **Amnesty Magazine**
- **Protect The Human stickers & Freedom stickers**
- **My Rights Passports**

Death Penalty campaign materials

- **'End the Death Penalty' placard** (ask people to pose for photos with this placard and upload them to your facebook group)
- **Death Penalty map:** display this on the back board behind your stall
- **Death Penalty stickers:** hand these out to people when they sign the petition to stop the execution of Reggie Clemons.

NB if you need more materials, you can order an extra Freshers Pack by calling our mailing house on 01788 545553 and quoting the code FFPack12.

Alternatively, you can download pdfs of some of these materials from www.amnesty.org.uk/freshers

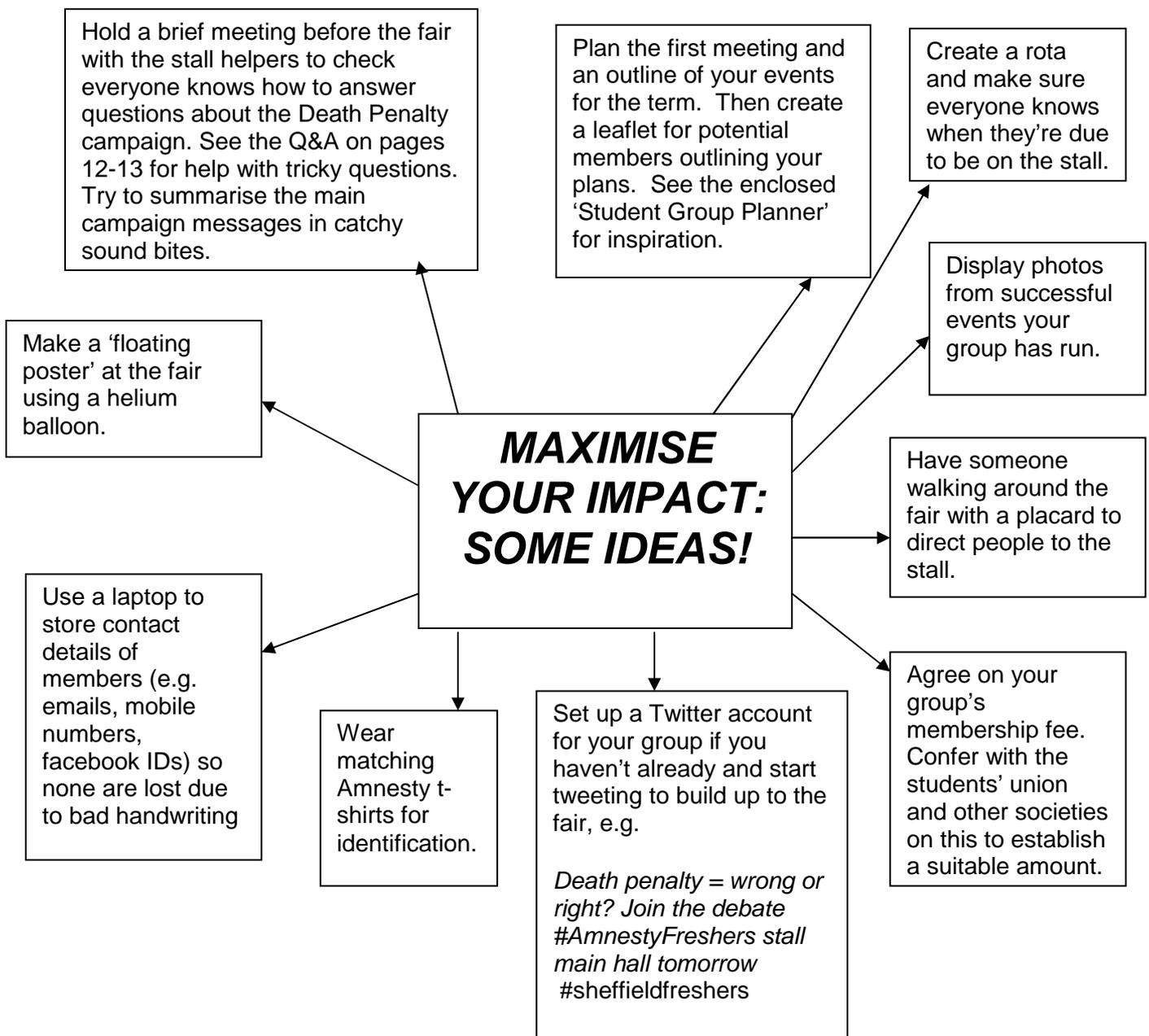
2. Making an impact – some helpful hints

Freshers' fairs are probably the most important day of the year for Amnesty International student groups so it is worth putting a lot of time and effort into planning them.

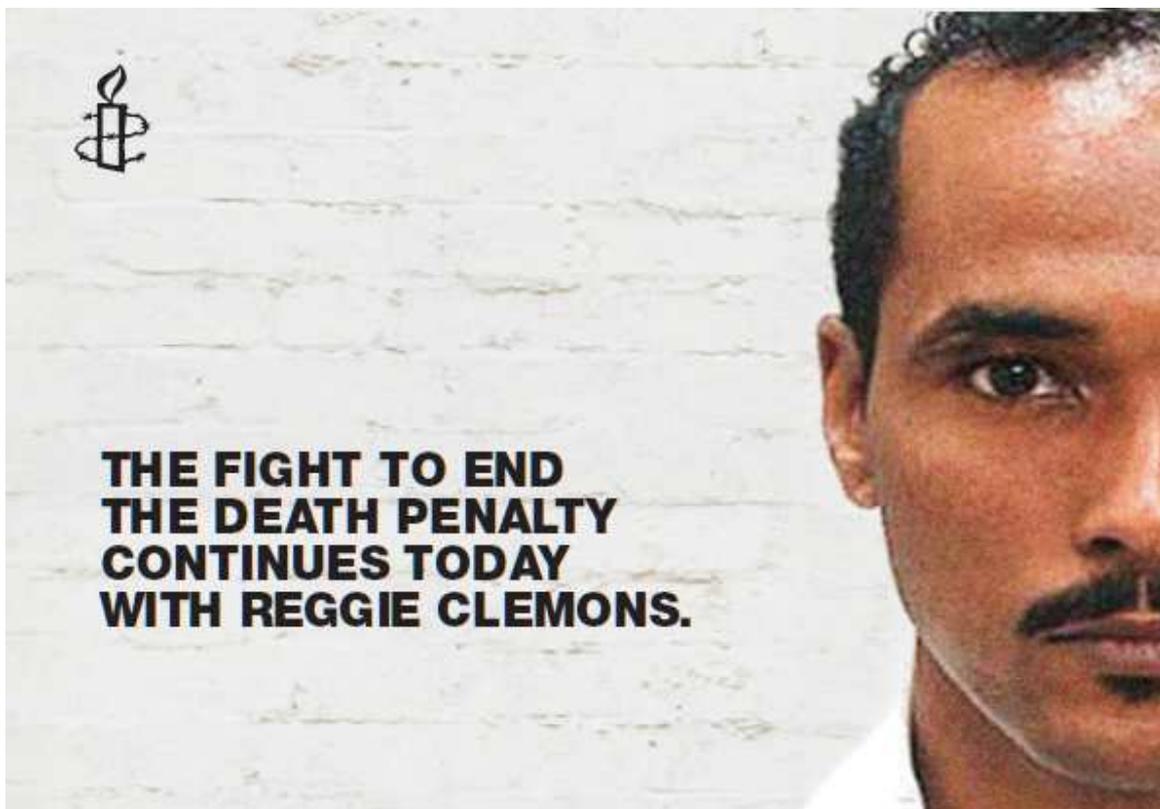
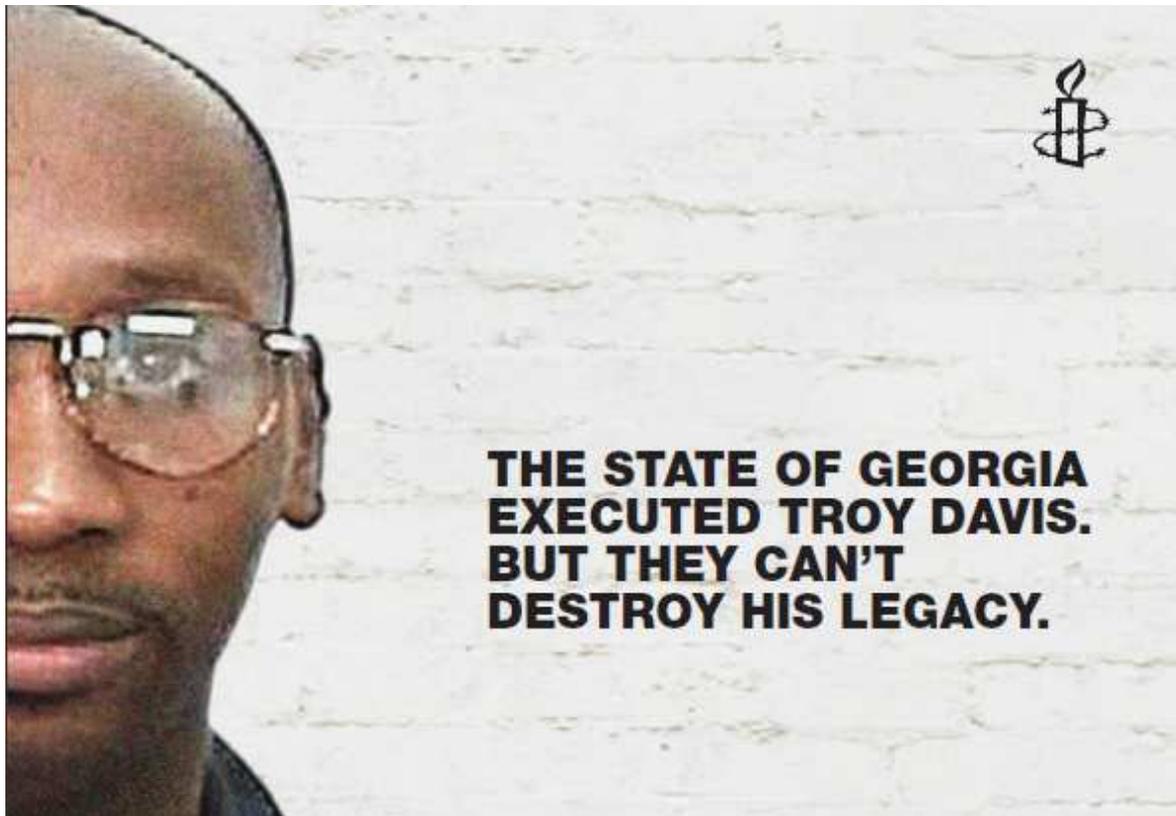
The fair is great for:

- recruiting new members of your group
- getting students involved in a campaign action
- raising the profile of the group

We've sent you lots of materials but here are some more suggestions on how to make a real impact and be super organised.



3. Death penalty campaign action



Background

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all circumstances, because:

- We believe it is a violation of two fundamental human rights: the right to life, and the right not to be tortured or subject to any cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.
- If a mistake is made it cannot be corrected. In the USA a 1987 study showed that 350 innocent people had been condemned to death since 1900 and 23 of them were executed.
- It is often used against certain groups of people more than others, such as people from poor backgrounds or of particular races.
- Capital punishment does not deter crime. Studies by the UN and others show the death penalty does not stop crime any better than other punishments.

The truth about the United States & the death penalty

The USA is becoming increasingly isolated as one of the few countries in the world that still uses the death penalty. In 2011 it was one of the top five highest executioners. There are currently more than 3,000 people on death row in the USA.

The death penalty is:

Retained in 33 American states. 17 states do not use the death penalty and five of those have ended it during the last five years.

Racially biased. Since 1977, the overwhelming majority of death row defendants (77%) have been executed for killing white victims, even though African-Americans make up about half of all homicide victims.

Risking innocent lives. Since 1973, 140 people have been released from death rows throughout the country when it became clear they had been wrongfully convicted. The number of innocent people who have been executed in that time is unknown.

Not a deterrent. FBI data shows that over the last 20 years the murder rate in states with the death penalty is on average higher than in states without.

Arbitrary and unfair. Most death row inmates could not afford their own attorney at trial. Local politics, the location of the crime, plea bargaining, and pure chance affect the process and make a lottery of who lives and dies.

Inhumane. A lethal injection is usually a cocktail of three drugs that paralyse before killing. Because of this potential to mask pain, the American Veterinary Medical Association consider this way of killing so inhumane they reject its use on sick animals. For human beings, however, lethal injection remains the main execution method in the US.

When it executed Troy Davis, Georgia proved the need to abolish the death penalty.



In 1989, Troy Davis, a 19 year-old African American was arrested and charged with the murder of off duty police officer Mark Allen MacPhail.

Davis always denied committing the murder. With a lack of physical evidence, the case against him rested entirely on statements from nine key witnesses.

At his trial in 1991, the jury found Davis guilty of murder and he was sentenced to death.

Since this trial, seven of the nine key witnesses recanted or changed their statements. Of the two who did not recant, one was a man who himself was implicated as the killer by numerous witnesses.

Twenty years after he was sentenced, and after three stays of execution, a fourth date was set. On 21 September 2011, Troy Davis was offered a last meal. He was allowed to meet with his family to tell them his final wishes. In a final twist of absurdity he was examined by a doctor to make sure he was healthy enough to be killed. Then he was led to the execution chamber.

As Amnesty supporters, you will no doubt remember Troy's case; many of you campaigned tirelessly on his behalf. In the years after he was sentenced to death there were so many doubts over his conviction that around a million people across the world signed petitions calling for his execution to be stopped. And a number of influential figures – including former US President Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Pope Benedict XVI – all echoed that call.

Tragically, we lost Troy. But our campaign for his life has strengthened our movement. We helped to change the debate on the death penalty. Troy himself was always absolutely clear that this campaign was not just about him. It was about the death penalty itself and how the system is broken. How it is riddled with discrimination, inconsistency and error. And why it must be abolished immediately. Troy's struggle for justice did not end with his execution. His case has raised people's consciousness, transforming views. With your support we'll keep campaigning, until Troy's wish of an abolished death penalty becomes a reality.

“We must dismantle this unjust system city by city, state by state and country by country. I can’t wait to stand with you, no matter if that is in physical or spiritual form. I will one day be announcing I AM TROY DAVIS AND I AM FREE.”

Troy Davis

Right now, we have a chance to change the end of this story for another man on death row. With your support, we hope to stop the execution of Reggie Clemons.

Reggie Clemons’ Case



- Sentenced to death for being an **accomplice** to a 1991 murder of two young white women
- No physical evidence
- Allegations of police coercion and misconduct by the prosecution
- Stacked jury

Reggie Clemons was 19 years old when he was arrested for his alleged role in the deaths of two young women in Missouri.

Julie Kerry was 21 and her sister Robin just 19 when they fell from a disused bridge in the city of St Louis and drowned in the raging Mississippi River below. Julie’s body was found three weeks later. Robin’s was never recovered.

Initially the girls’ cousin, Thomas Cummins, was formally arrested to face murder charges after implicating himself in the deaths. A few days later, however, Cummins was released and four young men, three black and one white, were arrested in his place.

Around a month later, Cummins formally identified the four men as being involved in the murder of his cousins. Later that day, all charges against Cummins were dropped.

One of the men he identified was Reginald Clemons, a 19 year-old African American with no police record.

After his arrest, Reggie was allegedly beaten by the police who questioned him

Following extensive interviewing by police, Reggie Clemons confessed to participating in the rape of the sisters, but denied any involvement in their fall from the bridge. **Two days later, however, he retracted his confession. He told the police Internal Affairs Department that during his interrogation he had been denied access to a lawyer and that his confession had been beaten out of him.** He said one of the officers 'grabbed me by the neck and slammed my head against the wall twice... I didn't want to get hit any more so I agreed to make the tape they wanted me to.'

Several witnesses, including a lawyer and counsellor at the prison, later testified to having seen Reggie's face swollen. Another witness described Reggie's face as looking 'lopsided'. Nonetheless, a federal District Court judge ruled that the statement should be allowed to stand as evidence.

With no physical evidence, the prosecution relied on two questionable witnesses

The first of these was Thomas Cummins who had been the prime suspect himself before pointing the finger at Reggie and the other three men. The other was one of Reggie's co-defendants – Daniel Winfrey, the only white member of the group. He was offered the opportunity to plead guilty to a lesser offence if he testified against Clemons and the other two. He did so and has since been released from prison.

Misconduct by the prosecution

The prosecutor in the case was Nels Moss. His conduct in previous criminal cases had been repeatedly criticised by state and federal courts. **In the Clemons case, he resorted to tactics that flew in the face of international standards.** It was an approach subsequently described by four federal judges as 'abusive and boorish'.

In his closing argument, Moss described a completely made up version of the crime in which the two girls were raped, sent into a room, and stabbed. Despite the fact that in reality there had been no room and no stabbing, this version was allowed to stand. Moss went on to inappropriately compare Clemons to serial killers Charles Manson and John Wayne Gacy. The judge later notified Moss that he was holding him in 'criminal contempt' for this reference and fined him \$500. In the court itself, however, this statement was also allowed to stand.

Reggie's case was heard by a stacked jury

Moss also went to great lengths to 'stack' the jury, dismissing a significant number of African Americans. The final jury line up, which should have been representative of the population of St Louis, had two black members and ten white. The city's population is just under fifty-fifty.

In spite of his flagrant misconduct, Moss succeeded in securing the conviction. Reggie Clemons was found guilty of being an accomplice to murder and sentenced to death.

19 years later, and the campaign for justice continues

Since his arrest, Reggie's parents have spent a lot of money – money they didn't have – on defence lawyers whose lack of experience, professionalism and commitment completely failed Reggie in the courtroom.

In desperation his family turned to new lawyers who immediately recognised that there were serious doubts about Reggie's conviction and sentence.

Reggie was scheduled for execution in June 2009. Thankfully, the team succeeded in securing a stay of execution.

The Missouri Supreme Court has now appointed a 'Special Master' judge to examine the case. His review will start on 17 September. Until then, Reggie's fate hangs in the balance.

With your support, we hope to stop this execution

Amnesty International is calling on the State of Missouri to commute Reggie Clemons' death sentence. We believe there are a number of reasons why the authorities should do this, including the claims of police and prosecutor misconduct, inadequate defence representation, improper juror exclusion and racism. And we believe they should do it because there has been more than enough judicial killing. The time has come to end the death penalty once and for all.

With your support we can shine a light on the flaws in the death penalty system and raise the profile of Reggie's case not just in Missouri, but across America and around the world. We will campaign hard and pressurise all the key authorities – but we need you to help us.

AFTER THE FRESHERS FAIR



- 4) **Create a photo gallery** on your Amnesty society's facebook group and upload the photos you took of people with placards.

Send a **welcome email** to your new contacts as soon as possible after the fair and include:

- a. A link to your facebook group and ask them to join it
 - b. Ask them to tag themselves in the photo gallery
 - c. Ask them to invite their friends to become members too
 - d. Time and venue of your first group meeting.
- 5) Don't forget to send us your petitions by **mid-October**.

There are lots of options for follow-up actions in this campaign, which you could use in your first Amnesty meeting of the year.

e.g. making T-shirts that read "I am still Troy Davis", or screening films about Troy and Reggie.

We will email you a 'First Meeting Guide' with lots of ideas and tips.



Death Penalty Questions & Answers

Why does Amnesty International oppose the death penalty?

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is the ultimate denial of human rights. It is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state in the name of justice. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

There can never be any justification for torture or for cruel treatment. Like torture, an execution constitutes an extreme physical and mental assault on an individual. The physical pain caused by the action of killing a human being cannot be quantified, nor can the psychological suffering caused by foreknowledge of death at the hands of the state.

The death penalty is discriminatory and is often used disproportionately against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic and religious communities. It is imposed and carried out arbitrarily.

In opposing the death penalty, isn't Amnesty International showing disrespect for victims of violent crime and their relatives?

In opposing the death penalty, Amnesty International in no way seeks to minimize or condone the crimes for which those sentenced to death were convicted. If it were, then a majority of countries are currently apologists for violent crime, clearly a nonsensical suggestion. As an organization deeply concerned with the victims of human rights abuses, Amnesty International does not seek to belittle the suffering of the families of murder victims, for whom it has the greatest sympathy. However, the finality and cruelty inherent in the death penalty render it incompatible with norms of modern-day, civilized behaviour. It is an inappropriate and unacceptable response to violent crime.

Isn't it necessary to execute certain prisoners in order to prevent them from repeating their crimes?

The death penalty as a method of preventing prisoners from re-offending is a blunt tool. By its very nature, the death penalty can only be carried out against a prisoner who is already imprisoned and therefore removed from society. Since that prisoner can no longer commit acts of violence against society, the death penalty is not needed as a method of protection.

Unlike imprisonment, the death penalty entails the risk of judicial errors which can never be corrected. There will always be a risk that some prisoners who are innocent will be executed. The death penalty will not prevent them from repeating a crime which they did not commit in the first place.

It is also impossible to determine whether those executed would actually have repeated the crimes of which they were convicted. Execution entails taking the lives of prisoners to prevent hypothetical future crimes many of which would never have been committed anyway. It negates the principle of rehabilitation of offenders.

There are those who argue that imprisonment alone has not prevented individuals who have been imprisoned from offending again once set free. The answer is to review the parole procedures in place with a view to preventing relapses into crime. The answer is certainly not to increase the number of executions.

Isn't it more cruel to lock up a prisoner for long periods or for life rather than to execute the individual?

As long as a prisoner remains alive he or she can hope for rehabilitation or for exoneration in the case of a prisoner who is subsequently found to be innocent. Execution removes the possibility of compensation for judicial error or rehabilitation of the offender.

The death penalty is a unique form of punishment entailing conditions not present in imprisonment: the cruelty of the execution itself, and the cruelty of being forced to wait on death row -- often for many years -- contemplating one's intended execution.

What do you say to those countries which claim that calling for a worldwide moratorium on capital punishment is in effect another attempt by the West to "impose their cultural values on us"?

Amnesty International welcomes the multiplicity of discourses on human rights grounded in different cultures and religions and believes that different visions contribute to our understanding of human rights. At the same time, the organization believes that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Although they may have been often developed in a Western context, they are not Western in content but derive from many different traditions and are acknowledged by all the members of the United Nations as the standards by which they have agreed to abide. It should be noted that the numerous nations who have abandoned the use of capital punishment come from differing regions and cultures. It therefore cannot be claimed that abolition of the death penalty is solely advocated by one section of world society.

By opposing the death penalty is Amnesty International implicitly criticizing the major world religions which sanction its use?

Major world religions emphasize mercy, compassion and forgiveness in their teachings. Amnesty International's call for the cessation of all executions is consistent with these teachings.

All major religious denominations are to be found in states which continue to use the death penalty in different regions of the world. Likewise states that have abolished the death penalty either in law or in practice are also found throughout the world, crosscutting religious lines. The death penalty is not exclusive to any particular religion; thus it would be wrong to interpret Amnesty International's campaign for the abolition of the death penalty as an attack on any particular religion. Amnesty International is an ethnically and culturally diverse, non-political organization which bases its work on international human rights. Its worldwide membership is drawn from across the globe and from a plethora of religions.

What signs are there that the battle to abolish the death penalty is being won?

141 countries have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice. Those who retain and use the death penalty are becoming increasingly isolated.

Later this year the United Nations General Assembly will, for the 4th time, vote on a resolution which calls for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

Digital tips



Before the fair

- Set up a Twitter account for your group if you haven't already
- Follow @AmnestyStudent and @AmnestyUK - we'll follow you + retweet your best bits
- Follow your Student Union on Twitter (again, make your tweets ridiculously retweetable so they start following you!)
- Use #AmnestyFresher on all your tweets so we know what you're all up to
- If your uni is using a hashtag for the fair or freshers-related stuff? (e.g. #durhamfreshers) - use it on all your tweets too
- Familiarise yourself with <https://bitly.com> to shorten URLs for your tweets
- Start tweeting to build up to the big day, e.g.
Death penalty = wrong or right? Join the debate #AmnestyFreshers stall main hall tomorrow #sheffieldfreshers
- Remind everyone who's running the stall to tweet during the day

After the fair

- Tweet about the day's events, e.g. *"Thanks all who came to #AmnestyFreshers #BirminghamFreshers – see you at first meeting, Tues at 7pm in the SU"*
- Make new people you met at the stall feel special by tagging them in your tweets, e.g. *"Thanks @Kritika (our new @AIUK_Bristol member) cool placard pic #bristolfreshers #amnestyfreshers"*
- Build up to your first meeting with reminders of the time and venue and all the exciting reasons they should attend.
- Eventually create a personalized signature for your email address which features a link to your Facebook and Twitter accounts (WiseStamp for example is free)

facebook

At the fair

- If you have a laptop and internet access, try to get people to join your Amnesty society's facebook group on your stall.
- Take photos of people with the 'End the Death Penalty' placard. Tell them you'll upload the photos to your facebook group and will email them the link so they can tag themselves. Make sure you get their email address!

After the fair

- Create a photo gallery on your Amnesty society's facebook group and upload the photos you took of people with the placard.
- Send a welcome email to your new contacts as soon after the fair as possible and include:
 - a. A link to your facebook group and ask them to join it
 - b. Ask them to tag themselves in the photo gallery
 - c. Ask them to invite their friends to become members too
 - d. Time and venue of your first group meeting.
- Share a link to your photo gallery on the wall of the AIUK Student Action Network facebook group – we'd love to see your photos!

Extra ideas

- Ask your group members to upload their placard photo as their facebook profile picture. If they tag your group, it will show up on your group's wall too.

For more digital tips, visit www.amnesty.org.uk/student

