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# Amnesty International

## MONTHLY ACTION

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



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March 2014

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# Syria:

## Marking THE 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING - March 15

The third anniversary of the Syria conflict will act as a grim reminder to the world of its failure to stop the suffering. As the world's media once again reflects on the crisis at this time, we need to make sure that we use the opportunity to demonstrate to world leaders that they need to do more to help the people of Syria. In 2014, with more than 130,000 killed in the conflict, and 300 people fleeing their homes every hour, the need for a powerful campaign is greater than ever before.

To this end Amnesty International is part of a global coalition of NGOs and civil society who have created a joint campaign to mark the anniversary with a demonstration of solidarity with ordinary Syrian people. These actions will then culminate in candle-lit / light based vigils attended by thousands of people across the world around major global landmarks on 13th March 2014.. The coalition of NGO and civil society partners around the world will be mobilising their members from the beginning of March through to the 15th March 2014, the 3rd anniversary of the uprising, to demand that world leaders help all those caught in the conflict. Actions can and will take place after 15 March of course.

The aim is to demonstrate global solidarity with children, men and women struggling each day to survive the Syria conflict and improved access for the civilian population of Syria to basic necessities, including food, medical aid and fuel.

### What you need to do:

#### 1 - Shine a light on Syrian's struggle to survive

During March, host your own vigil or other creative events using the light theme. Ideally get together in front of a local landmark and hold your vigil for Syria, take a photo with you/your group and the landmark in view and send it to [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)



You can use candles or battery operated candles or something more imaginative, how about using the light from your phones, or glowsticks (if you have any). If you want to make a pattern with your candles you could spell out **Syria** or **#WithSyria** or **Break the Sieges**. You can use the attached template press release to publicise your event.

#### 2 – Letter writing & E-mail action

Use the attached samples letters & write to both pro and anti-government representatives, calling on them to protect civilians. You can only e-mail anti-government representatives. You can also do this by visiting <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/Middle-East-and-North-Africa>

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## MONTHLY ACTION

### Background Information

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#### Syria:

#### Marking THE 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING - March 15

The conflict in Syria is the greatest humanitarian crises of our times. It has raged for nearly three years, claimed the lives of over 130,000 people, and forced nearly 9 million people from their homes. Sustained action around the world is needed to get sufficient aid to all those caught up in the Syria crisis and to make progress towards a political solution to the conflict.

In March 2014, the third anniversary of the Syria uprising will act as a tragic reminder to the world of its failure to stop the suffering. With more than 11,000 children killed in the conflict, and a million more living as refugees, the need for a powerful campaign calling for action is greater than ever before.

Throughout March 2014, the anniversary will be used to mobilise individuals and organisations around the world using the simple unifying symbol of light and will culminate in lighting up / projecting onto global iconic landmarks to shine a light of hope for Syria. The aim of projecting onto globally-recognised buildings is to turn iconic images around the world into symbols of hope and solidarity with those affected by the crisis. The event and lighting up of Trafalgar Square in London on 13 March from 6-7pm and other global landmarks will create the potential for a front page media moment with a specific global social media strategy designed to disseminate the images across the world and garner support from the public for Syrian children and families affected by the fighting and for a campaign action.

The coalition includes agencies from across global civil society, including Amnesty International, CAFOD, Care International, Christian Aid, Doctors of the World, FIDH, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Save the Children, The International Rescue Committee, War Child, and World Vision. We are also linking with the 'No Lost Generation' campaign, including UNICEF and UNHCR.

#### **Template Press Release & Amnesty report on Syria**

Attached is a template press which we'd encourage you to personalise and send to your local newspaper/website to help publicise Amnesty International's work on Syria, specifically the #WithSyria vigils this month. Meanwhile, also look out for a major Amnesty report on Syria and the need for access for humanitarian aid into Syria which will be published on or around 13 March. This will give you additional talking points for interviews or any other media work you may be doing around this time.

If you have any questions about this or any other aspect of doing media work for Amnesty, please don't hesitate to contact Neil Durkin at: [neil.durkin@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:neil.durkin@amnesty.org.uk), 020 7033 1547, @niluccio

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- The guidance sheet
- Background information
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#### **Be part of our virtual vigil**

Go to:

Website - [www.syriavigil.org](http://www.syriavigil.org)

Twitter - #withsyria

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#### GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?

For queries about this action and for updates please contact:

[activim@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activim@amnesty.org.uk) / 020 7033 1675

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/Middle-East-and-North-Africa>

Local group's monthly mailing can be downloaded from:

[www.amnesty.org.uk/groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups)