
Amnesty International

MONTHLY ACTION

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



March 2015

Syria: MARKING THE 4th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING - MARCH 15

Help Turn the Lights Back On in Syria & bring its people out of the darkness. We are #withSyria

Satellite images show that since the conflict began, three quarters of the lights in Syria have gone out. Four years of crisis have plunged Syria's people into the dark: destitute, fearful, and grieving for the friends they have lost, and the country they once knew. Meanwhile, the spectre of ISIS has fuelled fear and entrenched dangerous divisions within and beyond the region. Public and policymaker confidence that an end to the violence and suffering can be found is low. Yet every day, ordinary Syrians, like those in the Syrian Non Violence Movement (SNVM) are committing extraordinary acts of courage and heroism. By showing solidarity with these heroes we will inspire people around the world to act to *Turn the Lights Back On*. In a series of connected campaigns at specific moments, beginning on the fourth anniversary, online mobilisation, global coordinated offline actions, and high-impact media work will show governments that people care about the plight of Syrians, and demand action.

Our key calls to governments, including the UK, are:

- 1. Boost the humanitarian response** - fully fund the aid response and ensure refugees seeking safety find asylum, including through increased resettlement for the most vulnerable;
- 2. Stop attacks on civilians** - send an unequivocal message to parties to the conflict that attacks on civilians and blocks to aid will not be tolerated; and
- 3. Prioritise a political solution with human rights at the heart** - a halt to the suffering can only be achieved if negotiations - whether local or international - include safeguards to ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

Amnesty International, as part of the #withSyria global coalition of NGOs and civil society groups, will mark the anniversary with a demonstration of solidarity with ordinary Syrian people. These actions will culminate in candle-lit / light based vigils around the world.

What you need to do:

Help Turn the Lights Back On for Syria

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



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**. You can use the attached template press release to publicise your event.

Social media actions & petition

Please share our campaign video and a petition action to world leaders on our coalition website www.withsyria.com (goes live in mid March). You can also tweet images from your vigils with simple Twitter messages such as **Help Turn the Lights Back On in Syria & bring its people out of the darkness. We are #withSyria** (with an image from your vigil attached). Don't forget to use the #withSyria hashtag in your tweets.

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Background Information

Syria: MARKING THE 4th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING - MARCH 15

Four years on from the outbreak of conflict, the Syrian crisis continues to deepen, and the human suffering is greater than ever before. Public and policymaker engagement with the problem has waned, but the situation is worse than ever. Over 200,000 people have been killed and a staggering 10 million forced to flee their homes, contributing to the world's worst refugee crisis since WWII. Millions have little or no access to aid.

Driven by the human impulse to help their fellow citizens, protect their families, or simply to survive another day, many Syrian men, women and children continue to commit daily unseen acts of heroism. Inspired by their courage, we must stand #withSyria and demand our leaders do all they can to Turn the Lights Back On. We must not turn away.

By taking part in on- and/or offline actions in the run up to and on March 15 we will show our leaders that we stand #WithSyria and want more urgent action to end to the suffering.

Throughout March 2015, the anniversary will be used to mobilise individuals and organisations around the world using the simple unifying symbol of light to shine a light of hope for Syria.

The #withSyria 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.

If you have any questions about any areas of Amnesty's Syria work, especially policy & messaging, please contact Kristyan Benedict at: Kristyan.benedict@amnesty.org.uk 020 7033 1585, Twitter: @KreaseChan

Template Press Release 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.

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, 020 7033 1547, Twitter: @niluccio

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Be part of our virtual vigil

Go to:

Website – www.withsyria.com

Twitter - #withSyria

GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?

For queries about this action and for updates please contact:

activism@amnesty.org.uk / 020 7033 1675

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/syria>

Local group's monthly mailing can be downloaded from:

www.amnesty.org.uk/groups