

WRITE FOR

RIGHTS 2024

ORGANISING

AN EVENT

Activist Toolkit

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Planning your event and activities	3
What's next?	4
Working with the media	6
Focus cases 2024	8
Our ethical principles	10

INTRODUCTION

Write for Rights **EVENTS**

Every year, Amnesty International UK calls on activists to take part in Write for Rights and show their support for people enduring human rights abuses.

Since our early days, Amnesty groups and supporters across the country have organised a wide variety of events to encourage others to take action with them. This guide is designed to help people who are looking to hold their first Write for Rights event, as well as anyone interested in additional ideas for the campaign, such as ways to involve the wider community.

From concerts and theatrical performances to bake sales at local clubs, Amnesty group and supporter events have helped to make Write for Rights the world's biggest human rights campaign and activism event, with tens of thousands of people coming together every year.

For inspiration, read the campaign booklet for some of the many uplifting success stories that highlight the impact of activists acting in solidarity.

We want to hear from you

If you've organised an event or done something creative and impactful in the past, please tell us about it so we can share it with the movement to inspire others. Also let us know if you find this toolkit useful: email us at activism@amnesty.org.uk or contact your community organiser.



Letter-writing concert, Belgium

PLANNING YOUR EVENT AND ACTIVITIES

For starters, define what your event might look like and what you're hoping to achieve. This will help to determine the venue, date and how many people you need to make it happen.

1 Choose an event to host

Here are some suggestions:

- Hold a Write for Rights letter-writing meeting aimed at members and local Amnesty supporters.
- Run a group stall in your market or shopping centre.
- Ask your local faith group, church, mosque, synagogue or temple to put up an exhibition or display or to send a Write for Rights action to their congregation.
- Host a large-scale public event such as a concert or comedy night to introduce new people to Write for Rights, Amnesty and human rights issues.
- Organise a Write for Rights-themed AmnesTea. For a 'How to' guide, go to amnesty.org.uk/amnestea
- Run an event linked to the issue or activities that characterises a case your group is supporting.

2 Pick your venue

When deciding on your venue, consider the next steps for booking it:

- Is it suitable for your event's needs? For example, does it have IT facilities, display backboards and power?
- How accessible is it? What are the options for ramps, lifts, toilets, seating and tables?
- Does the venue offer facilities such as a catering space or can you bring your own food?
- Does it have restrictions on numbers?

What else do you need? A cover for your market stall, for instance. If you're running a Write for Rights disco or live music Jamnesty,

read our in-depth How to Plan a Jamnesty guide at amnesty.org.uk/resources/new-student-fundraising-guide-jamnesty

3 Who to invite?

Is your event designed for existing Amnesty supporters or do you want as many people as possible to come along? Write for Rights is a popular campaign proven to inspire more and more people every year. See how to approach new people on page 4. Think about the number of guests and send out invitations. Start assigning roles to people delivering the event and building a rota.

4 Read the resources

This guide comes with resources but you can go to the Write for Rights resources page at amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-2024-get-started to order or download case sheets, posters, template letters, educational resources and more. Alternatively, email us on activism@amnesty.org.uk

5 Be safe, inclusive and responsible

- Make sure you run your event safely. For a copy of Amnesty UK's Public Liability Insurance certificate, email sct@amnesty.org.uk
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify hazards and mitigating measures ahead of your event. If you have any questions about this, contact activism@amnesty.org.uk
- Is your event accessible and welcoming for all people and cultures? Consider the location, advertising and invitation list.
- Read our safeguarding policies at amnesty.org.uk/issues/safeguarding



'Write for Rights really does have a positive impact. Their support has made me... come out of prison even more committed to defending human rights.'

Human rights defender Germain Rukuki, freed in 2021, four years into a 32-year prison sentence in Burundi. Supporters took more than 436,000 actions for him during Write for Rights 2020.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What you need to consider now depends on your chosen event. Here are a few ideas you may find useful:

Does your event have a theme beyond Write for Rights?

For example:

- Folk music battle of the bands
- Christmas dinner party
- End-of-year school assembly
- Society social at your university

Do you need decorations?

Write for Right resources include booklets and posters, but can you think of anything else to make your event, stall or display stand out?

Do you need a sound system?

Check this out for music events, if you've invited a speaker or just for background music.

Will anyone be speaking (eg a panel, Q&A or presentation)?

For extra information on this year's cases and our Individuals at Risk work, email the Individuals at Risk team: iar@amnesty.org.uk

What about food and catering?

If you're putting on a dinner or bake sale, think about what type of food and drinks you want to serve, as well as timings and venue restrictions.

How will you engage a new audience?

You could hold an event at work at lunchtime or ask people to sign action cards in your workplace, school, library or community club.

As Amnesty supporters know more than most, stopping human rights abuses and helping people in difficult situations is serious and vital work. But there is also joy in solidarity and your events can be engaging and fun. Write for Rights is a great time for activists to come together and celebrate human rights successes over the year, as well as their own campaigning work.

Who can you invite?

However big or small, your event will make an impact. But if you're keen to reach out to a wider audience than you've done before, consider this guest list:

- MPs and local councillors
- Local civic society groups. For example, the WI, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Scout and Guide groups, faith groups, parenting groups, and other charities.
- Group homes, for example, for elderly people and adults with disabilities.
- People in your community who might be interested in the individuals, countries or issues in this year's campaign.

How to extend your reach

- Contact local media using the press release template on page 6. An interview, a plug on a radio show or an article can engage a broader audience.
- Spread the word about your Write for Rights event on social media, such as Facebook, using the hashtag #W4R24, or specific ones that link to individual cases (you'll find them in the main Write for Rights 2024 booklet).

It can be nerve-racking to ask people you don't know to come to an event. Read the Eden Project's excellent tips in *Beating invite anxiety – how to invite people to your event*. This guide is tailored to a Big Lunch, but the advice works for any community event.

Visit edenprojectcommunities.com/big-lunch-resources/how-to-invite-people-to-your-big-lunch

Or scan the QR code.



Build momentum

At your event, consider ways to extend the impact of the moment into the New Year and beyond.

Ask people to take a photo of their action and tag your local group, letting their friends know where they can take action, too.

Provide people with newsletter sign up forms so you can keep in touch. Also offer Amnesty membership sign-up forms.

Invite any particularly engaged people to your next group meeting.

Fundraising at your event

Fundraise at your event to help cover your costs and raise funds for your group and Amnesty International UK.

Here are some suggestions – but feel free to get creative and try out your own ideas, too.

Quiz You'll need a venue, quizmaster and prizes (usually donated). Charge for entry. Between rounds, ask people to take action on a Write for Rights case.

Live music Busking sessions, open-mic nights, barn dances, day-long jazz concerts, inviting a choir or someone to play the guitar while



Live music event, Mongolia

people are writing – these have all worked for activists before. People are more inclined to donate if they are being treated to live performances.

AmnesTea Serve drinks and cakes in return for donations, and write cards together. Bake your own cakes or ask a local supermarket or bakery to donate them. See amnesty.org.uk/amnestea

Raffle Approach local businesses and supporters for prizes. Sell tickets at your event and hold the draw at the end. This will keep people around to take action on cases and learn more about human rights.

Support and materials

Our Community and Events Fundraising team can talk through your plans, provide free resources and help promote your event to other Amnesty supporters near you. We will add your event to our events listings amnesty.org.uk/events

Email fundraise@amnesty.org.uk

Also visit amnesty.org.uk/organise-event



Solidarity stand and posters

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Tell your local press about Write for Rights and your event. You can find the email addresses of your local papers and radio stations on their websites.

We have created a template press release for your group to fill out and send. See [amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-2024-get-started](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-2024-get-started)

Include the below lines as appropriate for your group/activities:

Amnesty International [GROUP]

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

[Insert Date Of Release]

[TOWN/AREA NAME] RESIDENTS JOIN WORLD'S BIGGEST LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN TO HELP NINE ACTIVISTS FACING DANGER

Amnesty International [group]'s Write for Rights campaign launches to support nine individuals facing human rights abuses

[Town name] locals will join millions around the world sending letters, emails and texts to support people who have been jailed, attacked or disappeared. People across the UK can join to help nine individuals facing abuses

Add details on any Write for Rights activities that your group is organising. Include details about media opportunities at the event, including photo/interview opportunities

Amnesty International [group] has launched its flagship annual letter-writing campaign, Write for Rights across [area], to support nine activists around the world who have been attacked, jailed, harassed or disappeared for standing up for their rights.

[Town] residents are invited to join the global action which takes place across November and December.

People around the world will send millions of cards, emails and tweets of solidarity to individuals or groups of people whose freedoms are being denied and will write letters putting pressure on those in power to stop the abuses being committed against them.

This year, Write for Rights - which is funded by players of the People's Postcode Lottery - will support nine individuals who are suffering abuses, including:

- **Ana da Silva Miguel**, also known as **Neth Nahara**, was arrested in August last year after broadcasting a video on TikTok criticising President João Lourenço. The next day, Angola's first stage court convicted her of an 'outrage against the state, its symbols and bodies'. She was sentenced to six months in prison and fined one million kwanza (approximately \$1,200). Last September, Angola's second stage court extended Neth's sentence to two years, following an appeal by the public prosecutor. During her imprisonment, the authorities denied Neth her daily HIV medication for eight months, which severely impacted her health.
- **Oqba Hashad**, an Egyptian business student, has been arbitrarily detained for nearly five years without trial solely because of his brother's human rights activism. Despite a court order for his release, he remains detained in horrific conditions, including being denied a proper prosthetic leg. Prison authorities have interrogated Oqba on multiple occasions about his brother's activism and contact with his family. Egypt, as a state party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, must ensure detainees with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodation and health services.

- **Professor Şebnem Korur Fincancı**, head of the Turkish Medical Association, faces more than seven years in prison because of her human rights work. Professor Fincancı is a prominent human rights defender, anti-torture advocate and forensic medicine expert. In October 2022, she was arrested and put in pre-trial detention. A criminal investigation was launched against her after she called for an independent investigation into allegations that Turkish armed forces might have used chemical weapons in Kurdistan Region of Iraq in comments during a live TV interview. Professor Fincancı was later convicted of trumped-up charges of 'making propaganda for a terrorist organisation'. She is currently awaiting the result of an appeal, but also faces additional charges linked to her human rights work.

[Option: The XXX Amnesty Group is hosting its letter-writing event at [insert details]]

[Optional quote – amend and tweak as you wish]:

Amnesty International [group] spokesperson, [name] said: 'We hope that many [town name] residents take part in Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign this year to make a difference to the lives of nine individuals who are facing horrific abuses and urgently need support. Letters sent from [town] will make the noise about the injustices they face even louder and will have a huge impact.'

Sacha Deshmukh, chief executive of Amnesty International UK, said: 'The people we have focused on this year are all imprisoned because the governments of their countries value power over free speech. By joining this campaign, people in the UK – and indeed around the world – can help improve their chances of getting justice. Sending a letter or email might seem like a small act, but when sent in their thousands they can change lives: those in power are forced to take notice.'

'Amnesty's Write for Rights campaign – which has been made possible with funding from the players of the People's Postcode Lottery – helps to protect the lives of persecuted people every year. We hope to see people across the country getting involved to make as much noise as possible about the injustices these human rights defenders are facing.'

Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign goes back to the very roots of the movement, which was founded in 1961, with Amnesty's early campaigners writing letters of support to those affected by human rights abuses, as well as letters of concern to governments around the world.

Successes from previous Write for Rights campaigns:

Human rights defender Rita Karasartova was arrested in 2022 along with 26 others for opposing a new border agreement that gave control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan.

She was initially detained for organising 'mass disorder' and later charged with attempting to 'violently overthrow the government', which carries a potential 15-year sentence.

Rita and at least 21 others were acquitted on 14 June this year: a significant victory for justice and human rights in Kyrgyzstan, even though the prosecutor has filed an appeal against the ruling.

She subsequently expressed her gratitude for the countless letters she received from Amnesty supporters during the campaign, emphasising that each one gave her immense hope and strength, reinforcing her belief in the power of solidarity.

In 2021 Amnesty International campaigned for human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker, who received a presidential pardon in July last year and was released from prison the following day. He is now safely reunited with his loved ones.

Cecillia Chimbiri and Joanah Mamombe were acquitted by the High Court in July 2023 of communicating falsehoods and obstructing the course of justice. The two – together with Netsai Marova, who did not face trial as she is out of the country – were arrested and abducted in May 2020 following a protest on government's failure to provide social protection during the Covid 19 pandemic. Amnesty International campaigned for them in the 2022 Write for Rights campaign.

ENDS

For more information on Write for Rights 2024 and for pictures, illustrations and further detail on the cases please contact [NAME].

Media contact: Rachel Reilly; rachel.reilly@amnesty.org.uk

Out of hours: 07721 398984 | www.amnesty.org.uk | Twitter: @NewsFromAmnesty

FOCUS CASES 2024

This year, as Amnesty UK, we are focusing on three cases where solidarity from the UK is likely to make a particularly strong impact. After the campaign, you may want to continue campaigning for them and the rights they represent or defend. To highlight the context of their cases, Amnesty UK activists are sharing their insights with you here.

Read more about their stories in the Write for Rights campaign booklet or at [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write)



Ana da Silva Miguel (aka Neth Nahara)

Angola

Jailed for criticising the president

Ana da Silva Miguel, also known as Neth Nahara, was arrested at her home in Luanda on 13 August 2023 after broadcasting a live video on TikTok criticising President João Lourenço.

The next day, Angola's first stage court convicted her of an 'outrage against the state, its symbols and bodies' under article 333 of the penal code. She was sentenced to six months in prison and fined one million kwanza (approximately \$1,200).

On 27 September, Angola's second stage court extended Neth's sentence to two years, following an appeal by the public prosecutor. The court did not allow her lawyers to counter-appeal as legally prescribed and has not responded to their complaint over the flawed process. During her imprisonment, authorities denied Neth her daily HIV medication for eight months, which severely impacted her health.

Urgent action is needed to secure her release and ensure she receives proper medical care.

- To take action and find out more about this case visit [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write)



Oqba Hashad

Egypt

Detained without trial due to his brother's activism

Business student Oqba Hashad has been arbitrarily detained for nearly five years without trial solely because of his brother's human rights activism. Despite a court order for his release, he remains detained in horrific conditions, including being denied a proper prosthetic leg.

Prison authorities have interrogated Oqba on multiple occasions about his brother's activism and contact with his family in Egypt. They also questioned him on whether he had shared any information with his brother about his prison conditions.

Since 2013, the Egyptian authorities have violated the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. They use counter-terrorism laws to restrict these rights, have arbitrarily detained thousands of critics, and target relatives of dissidents in retaliation.

The government must immediately release Oqba and ensure he receives appropriate medical care.

- To take action and find out more about this case visit [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write)



Professor Şebnem Korur Fincancı

Türkiye

Jailed for calling for a chemical weapons' investigation

Professor Şebnem Korur Fincancı, a renowned forensic medicine expert and head of the Turkish Medical Association, was arrested on 27 October 2022 after publicly calling for an independent investigation into allegations Turkish armed forces used chemical weapons in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. She was charged with 'making propaganda for a terrorist organisation' and sentenced to two years and eight months in prison in January 2023. Although released pending her appeal, she faces further legal harassment and additional charges for her human rights work.

As a long-time human rights defender, Professor Fincancı has been repeatedly targeted by the authorities, especially for her role in documenting torture and other violations.

Her conviction must be overturned, and all charges against her dropped, as she is being punished solely for defending human rights.

- To take action and find out more about this case visit [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write)

OUR ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

When you are working with rights holders

Amnesty International as an organisation has an ethical responsibility when we work with people or act on their behalf. Any action, project or campaign needs to be rooted in these six ethical principles:

- dignity and agency
- duty of care
- non-exploitation
- equity and non-discrimination
- integrity and transparency
- confidentiality

These principles apply to your own activities and events in support of campaigns, for example, when you organise events, liaise with speakers, represent Amnesty at meetings, actions and protests, and research and feature people in materials. Working ethically is something we constantly have to remind ourselves of. Keeping these principles in mind will ensure that the people we work with and for are safe and treated respectfully, and that we make decisions that are appropriate and create positive impacts.

Why do we have ethical principles?

As activists with good intentions, it can be easy to assume that our campaign actions are ethical, that we are treating everyone with respect and protecting the dignity and safety of those we work for and with. Everything we do affects the fate and feelings of real people, whether this be campaigning or appeals.

However, due to the nature of our work, our best intentions can sometimes inadvertently lead to negative consequences. For example, when we're under pressure to quickly produce materials that grab people's attention or we're trying to live up to the expectations of others involved. There are also limits to our own experience.

These principles are guidelines to help us work well as a global movement. They can be referred to as a checklist to identify moments when we should seek advice from colleagues, supporters, and the people we work alongside.

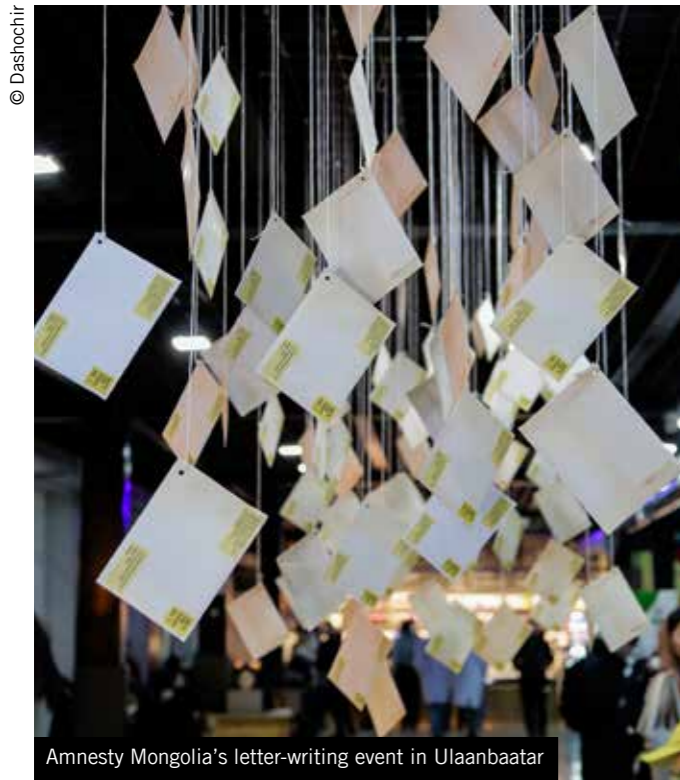
- These ethical principles are designed to reflect and embody Amnesty's values as an organisation and outline how we should treat everyone – fairly, honestly and with dignity.
- They help ensure we're acting responsibly and guide our work.
- They serve as a statement to the public, donors and rights holders that we take good practice and acting responsibly seriously.
- Having a set of principles enables local interpretation but ensures consistency across sections and the Amnesty movement.
- They are a requirement of Accountable Now (formerly known as INGO Accountability Charter) as part of responsible and transparent advocacy.



How to apply our ethical principles to your own work

Here are some examples to think about and why it's important

Principle	Example	Guidance
Dignity and agency	Inviting a speaker to an event	Speak to the person beforehand. How do they want to be introduced and represented? What pronouns do they want to use? What part of their story do they want to be at the core of our messaging and communications?
Duty of care	Organising an event with a visiting human rights defender	Do not post their details or what they've said on social media without their consent. First assess the risks together, for example, reprisals when returning to their country for publicly criticising the authorities or associating with Amnesty. The same applies to developing content on an individual's case.
Non-exploitation	Writing a piece of communication to show how Amnesty has been effective in past campaigns	Do not include a case story from 10 years ago without checking if we still have consent to feature that person. Consent expires after two years – and can be withdrawn at any time. The information or the way it is appears may also have changed.
	Your group is building a new relationship	Undertake a cost-benefit analysis with that person so they understand how they can benefit from working with Amnesty – and what the potential risks are. Talk through the different ways we can support and promote their work. Be transparent about the benefits Amnesty may gain from the relationship beyond creating human rights change.
Equity and non-discrimination	Working with an individual	Equity means putting in place everything that is needed for a person to have an experience working with Amnesty equal to the one we have in working with them. This means ensuring equal power in an unequal dynamic. Create the space for them to say no, to suggest or implement ideas, and to advance or change the course of our work.
Integrity and transparency	Starting a new relationship	Be upfront about the limits of our expertise and abilities, and how and when decisions on work will be made, and include steps to ensure equitable participation. Record and share agreements. Don't say 'We'll stick with you till the end' because we can't promise that.
Confidentiality	Writing a press release or other materials	Only include information from Amnesty, not other sources, for example the web or media outlets. We do not know if the person has given consent for the information to be shared and for the way they are represented, or whether they are happy for Amnesty to use and act on the content.



Amnesty Mongolia's letter-writing event in Ulaanbaatar

If you have any questions or would like to talk through anything,
we can provide advice from community organisers and fundraisers.

Please contact activism@amnesty.org.uk
or fundraise@amnesty.org.uk



Add FSC
Logo
here