

# Terms of Reference for the Activism Forum (Sept 2021; revised Oct 2024; approved at 25.11.24 Activism Forum meeting)

## Background and context

At the time of drafting these Terms of Reference, the Amnesty movement in the UK was about to start implementing a new strategic plan covering 2022-30. At the Oct 2024 revision Amnesty was two years into the strategic plan period.

The plan describes the Amnesty movement in the UK as at a turning point and emphasises how we all the need to change the ways we operate and behave internally and externally if we are to reverse the current and ongoing attack on human rights in the UK and throughout the world.

The 2022-30 plan has three goals:

### *1 Change attitudes to human rights*

By 2030 human rights will be better understood, valued and defended by increasingly large sections of the public. Racist, sexist, misogynistic and other stereotypes that facilitate human rights violations will be declining in public and political discourse.

### *2 Build a powerful movement*

By 2030 more people, especially people or groups who currently have less social power, will have the connectedness, access, protection, resources and will to stand up for their rights and those of their communities.

### *3 Win human rights victories*

By 2030, Amnesty International UK and our allies will have fought for and won key human rights victories on the way to securing long-term sustainable change for people in the UK and around the world.

Our work as the Activism Forum will contribute to all three strategic goals, but we will focus most of our work on supporting the achievement of Goal 2 - to build a powerful movement. This will involve us building on existing work associated with the Impact of the Movement strategy to enable activists to work more effectively together and have even more impact within their communities and beyond.

We often state that our greatest strength is that we are a people-powered movement and that millions of people worldwide commit their time and expertise to take action and be leaders for human rights in their communities as well as providing financial support. The Activism Forum will work with staff, other activists and partners to help ensure these words are real; that we are making the most of the time and energy that people are willing and able to contribute; and that we are creating a culture which welcomes, supports and encourages people from all backgrounds to use their power and play active roles in communities throughout the UK.

We will develop and support initiatives for Amnesty in the UK to become less London-centric movement. We will work alongside other lead activist structures and

staff to decentralise our work across the UK and develop an understanding of the impact of our work across the whole of the UK, including all nations and regions.

## **1. Name**

1.1 The name of the Forum recognised by and under the control and supervision of Amnesty International UK Section (“the Section”) shall be the Activism Forum (“the Forum”).

## **2. Aims**

2.1 The Forum will advance the objectives of the Section, including the current strategic plan and in particular Goal 2 (building a powerful movement), and conform to the practices and policies of the Section or global movement where applicable.

2.2 The Forum will seek to embody and champion values of inclusion, diversity, equity and anti-racism, as well as positive, collaborative, responsive and proactive behaviours.

2.3 The Forum shall support and facilitate the Activism Representatives to further their aims as described in the Activism Representative Role Description.

2.4 Members of the Forum will seek to share examples of good practices, new ways of working and successes, and facilitate their wider adoption, including in relation to:

- campaigning approaches and methods, including activist-led campaigns
- new models for organising, including flexible area networks
- community organising, including building partnerships
- education and training
- achieving inclusion, inclusion, equity and anti-racism
- team-working at all levels
- enabling groups and networks to thrive, and individuals to grow and develop in their roles
- events, outreach, communications and use of media channels
- fundraising
- organisational and administrative practices.

2.5 Members of the Forum will also collaborate among themselves and bring people together to build relationships, solve problems and develop new solutions in support of its aims.

2.6 Where relevant, members of the forum should support engaging the broader activist base in activities linked to key strategies and campaigns.

## **3. Membership, Chair & Representatives**

3.1 Membership of the Forum shall comprise Activism Representatives

3.2 The Chair will be nominated and elected by the Activism Representatives. The Forum may decide that the role of Chair for individual Forum meetings may rotate amongst Activism Representatives.

3.2.1 The Chair will hold the post for one year and can be re-elected.

3.3 The Forum will elect its representatives to AIUK Board sub-committees and other Amnesty meetings and committees as occasions arise.

3.3.1 Representatives hold the post for one year unless otherwise decided, and can be re-elected. The role will be discussed annually by the Forum and options for eg co-opting additional people and peer shadowing will be discussed at this juncture.

3.3.2 Representatives will endeavour to consult their fellow Activism Representatives where appropriate and feasible and will report back on proceedings.

3.3.3 Representatives will endeavour to attend all meetings to which they are elected representatives and will inform the Forum if they are unable to do so in order for the Forum to find a replacement where possible.

The Chair of the Forum and any representative can be asked to step down at any time if the majority of the Forum members request this.

3.5 Members of the Forum are subject to the Section's Activist Code of Conduct and will be removed from their position if they are found to be in breach of the Code.

#### **4. Appointment of Activism Representatives**

4.1 In order to apply for the role of Activism Representative, a candidate must be or become a member of the Section. If there are questions or concerns about acquiring membership, for example on grounds of cost, these can be raised with the Local Groups Administrator.

4.2 Appointments of Activism Representatives and Forum representatives will be overseen by the Local Groups Administrator.

#### **5. Meetings of the Forum**

5.1 The Forum shall meet at least three times a year. There will be additional meetings as deemed appropriate by the Forum.

5.2 The decisions of the Forum shall be by consensus, or if a consensus cannot be reached, the decisions of the Forum shall be by simple majority of those Forum members present and voting.

5.3 The Chair of the Forum shall work with the Local Groups Administrator and fellow Activism Representatives to produce agendas for meetings.

5.4 Activism Representatives will take it in turn to produce minutes of Forum meetings in a timely manner.

5.5 Activism Representatives will communicate decisions relevant to local activists from the minutes of Forum meetings to their local groups, networks and other relevant Amnesty activists. Minutes of the Forum shall be available to local group and network activists and others via request to the Local Groups Administrator.

## **6. Accountability and Governance**

The Forum shall comply with the Section's codes of practice and policies wherever possible unless otherwise stated.