



## Will you stand for human rights?



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Local group's monthly mailing can be downloaded from:  
[www.amnesty.org.uk/groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups)

# Amnesty International GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

## Join the General Election campaign

7<sup>th</sup> May 2015 is the General Election in the UK. We want to ensure the next UK government and parliament are supportive of human rights and work to protect them in the UK and internationally. A general election is a good opportunity to engage with politicians in your local area and to build a relationship with whoever is elected.

In the run up to the election politicians will be engaging with their constituents (you) a lot more than they normally do and all the main political parties will have candidates canvassing for votes in your constituency. We are looking to use this opportunity to show all candidates, and through them their political party, that Amnesty is a movement of passionate and committed members who care about how the next government and parliament acts on human rights. When our voice is heard by those in power we can achieve incredible progress on human rights. In the last parliament we secured UK support for a global Arms Trade Treaty, a commitment to resettle some vulnerable Syrian Refugees and greater protection for women fleeing domestic violence.

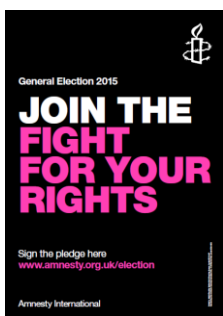
Our human rights are under attack at home and abroad. In the UK, plans to scrap the Human Rights Act are threatening our fundamental freedoms. And despite a global ban, three quarters of the world's governments still use torture – yet continue to deny it. Tell your parliamentary candidates that you stand for human rights.

### The Fight for Rights pledge

We have launched an activist pledge. As politicians stand for election, Amnesty is asking 'what will you stand for?' The idea is for you and your group to take the pledge, order extras to use at events, stalls etc... and engage the general public in the campaign. Collect these up locally, and then once a MP is elected, arrange to meet them and hand the pledges over showing support for human rights in their constituency.

### Find out about your candidates:

We also hope you can use this opportunity to gather information about all your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (all the people who are standing in the election in your constituency).



Poster



Pledge



Placard

## Resources

Order your resources by contacting TFS on 01788 545553 and quote the below codes.

- Pledge cards - GE001
- Posters - GE002
- Placards - GE003

Get enough for your group and to use at events from now until the election on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015. If you or your group are on Twitter why not take a photo of you taking the pledge and post it online using #GE2015 and @amnestyuk

# GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

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## How your group can get involved

Below are suggestions of activities that your group could do on top of taking the pledge.

### **Step 1: Take the Fight for Rights pledge and collect others' pledges.**

Also share the pledge via Twitter, Facebook and email to encourage people to get involved

### **Step 2: Make contact with your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates.**

There is a website called 'Your Next MP' that lists all candidates that they are aware of so is pretty comprehensive <https://yournextmp.com/>

If you don't think you have them all on this site then you should be able to get their names, addresses and telephone numbers from the local party headquarters or from the websites listed in annex 1. Please contact the advocacy team if you have any problems ([lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk)). Also contact us if it is not clear which constituency you should be covering. If there is more than one group in the constituency then work together on contacting candidates/organising meetings.

### **Meet with your candidates**

It would be great if your group could **arrange a meeting with all your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs)**. This would be an opportunity to show them what issues are important to their constituents and to find out what human rights issues they are passionate about. You can do individual meetings but as there could be a few candidates it may be less time consuming to invite them all to a single meeting (you could invite them to a group meeting or an event you are already planning such as a Amnestea, or put on a panel event with the candidates and invite the public to attend.)

At the meeting tell them you have taken the pledge and find out what they think about the two main issues in the pledge – the Human Rights Act and the Stop Torture campaign – so when one of them is elected you will have begun to build a relationship with them and know what they are interested in. **Please remember to feedback** so your work can help us to engage better with the new parliament. Email feedback and any questions about putting on an event to [lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk)

When you have a meeting arranged **why not invite the local press?** If no one from the local press can make it then send them a press release (see Appendix 3) and a photo from the event on the same day. Make sure the photo includes all the candidates so there is no bias. If you have any questions about contacting the media you can email Harriet Garland, [harriet.garland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:harriet.garland@amnesty.org.uk)

### **Write to your candidates**

If any candidates cannot attend or you cannot arrange a meeting please write to the candidates outlining that you have taken the pledge and asking them what they will do on these issues and what human rights issue they care about.

The challenge for the next UK government will be how to deliver consistent human rights policies both at home and abroad, we are therefore asking you to raise two major issues - the Human Rights Act and the Stop Torture campaign. To help prepare for the meeting there are briefings on the two major issues on the Amnesty website [www.amnesty.org.uk/election](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/election)

## Amnesty International

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### Promote the meeting

Use social media before and after your meeting, post photos and live updates from the event. Use #GE2015 and @amnestyuk. If you candidates sign the pledge, or stand with the placard why not post a photo? Remember to tag in your PPC or their party if they have a Twitter feed. Also keep an eye on popular hashtags in the run up to the election – join the current conversations and tell people why Human Rights matter to you.

### **Step 3: Other ways to engage with your candidates**

Members of the group could **attend other public meetings/hustings of candidates** and ask questions as well as questioning canvassers on their party's human rights policies.

Use other opportunities to **raise these issues in the media**: letters in the press, which could be an open letter to the candidates or you could take part in phone-ins on local radio.

### **Step 4: Feedback!**

Please complete the enclosed **feedback form (annex 2)** after meeting your candidate(s) and return to the advocacy team. You can email the form to [lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk) or post C/O Laura Trevelyan 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

### **After the election**

Once you know who your MP will be for the next 5 years, it would be a great time for your group to contact them congratulating them on their election, reminding them of any promises they made prior to the election and maybe inviting them to address the group or to a social event. **Please use this opportunity to hand over the fight for rights pledge cards your group has collected.**

We will be running an online action to PPCs so if you get in touch before this meeting we can give you the number of actions taken in your constituency to add to the pledge cards you have collected.

### **Political neutrality**

At Amnesty we work independently and impartially to promote respect for human rights. This means Amnesty is a non-party political organisation. We campaign for political change on human rights issues but we do not side with one party over another. When representing Amnesty please be aware of this and maintain political neutrality. We will work with all MPs that are willing to engage with us. This also means that you need to engage with *all* PPC's standing for election in your constituency.

### **Issues to raise**

The pledge focuses on broad support for the Human Rights Act and Stop Torture campaign. There are more detailed briefings on the Amnesty website [www.amnesty.org.uk/election](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/election)

### **How will the Lobbying Act affect your campaigning around the election?**

In January 2014, a new piece of legislation received Royal Assent. Officially it's known as the Transparency of Lobbying, non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014. Most

importantly, it shouldn't stop you campaigning on any issues, including those related to an election. You don't need to change your planned campaigning over this period. Please keep calm and carry on.

## **Amnesty International GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

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When campaigning during the General Election we ask you to maintain a detailed record of all your expenditure on public activities and keep all receipts that are more than £200 in value. Please provide us with your receipts and records at the end of each month, starting end of November 2014. You can scan or photograph them and email [lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk), or you can post them to: Laura Trevelyan, Amnesty International UK, Human Rights Action Centre, 25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA. If you receive donations – including goods or services of £500 or more in value and these are specifically for regulated campaign activity, then you will need to record the donor contact details and tell us straight away so that we can ensure that this is treated correctly under the new law. If you are planning on printing your own materials to use publicly on the General Election/work with PCCs, please talk to us first. This is because they may need to carry what is known as an 'imprint', stating the publisher and promoter. This is a simple procedure.

For more information see - <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/comply-lobbying-act-guide-local-groups>

### **Guidance if you are planning a hustings**

A hustings is a meeting during the election campaign when people can ask questions of the candidates standing in their constituency. It normally takes the form of a panel debate. Below is some guidance from the electoral commission on holding a hustings – find more [here](#).

#### **To show your hustings is non-selective you should:**

- be able to give impartial reasons why you have not invited particular candidates or parties. You should be prepared to explain your reasons to candidates or parties you haven't invited.
- make sure that candidates or parties you invite represent a reasonable variety of view, from different parts of the political spectrum
- allow each candidate or party representative attending a fair chance to answer questions and, where appropriate, a reasonable opportunity to respond to points made against them by other candidates or party representative
- inform the audience at the meeting of candidates or parties standing who haven't been invited.

Impartial reasons may emerge from the following considerations:

- local prominence of some parties or candidates over others
- the number of elected representatives at the local or national level
- recent election results in the area
- resources and other practicalities constraining numbers of invitees
- security concerns

Impartial reasons do not include reasons such as your views on the policies of a candidate or party.

If you want advice about putting on an event or who to invite then please contact the advocacy team [lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:lobbyfeedback@amnesty.org.uk)

## Annex 1: Finding your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

There is a website called 'Your Next MP' that lists all candidates that they are aware of so is pretty comprehensive - <https://yournextmp.com/>

If you can't find all your candidates on this site (new candidates can come up regularly) then all the political parties have candidates listed on their websites (not all parties have candidates in all seats but make sure you check all that apply for you area). You may have independent candidates so if you hear about any make sure to engage with them also.

All political parties that currently have MPs in Westminster are listed below.

### National parties

- Labour Party <http://www2.labour.org.uk/candidates>
- Conservative Party  
[https://www.conservatives.com/OurTeam/Prospective Parliamentary Candidates](https://www.conservatives.com/OurTeam/Prospective_Parliamentary_Candidates)
- Liberal Democrat Party [http://www.libdems.org.uk/general\\_election\\_candidates](http://www.libdems.org.uk/general_election_candidates)
- The Green Party [www.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.greenparty.org.uk)
- UK Independence Party <http://www.ukip.org/regions>
- Respect - <http://www.respectparty.org/general-election-2015/>

### Scotland

- Scottish Green Party <http://www.scottishgreens.org.uk/people/>
- Scottish National Party (SNP) [www.snp.org](http://www.snp.org)

### Wales

- Plaid Cymru <http://www.partyofwales.org/who-we-are/>

### Northern Ireland

- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) [www.mydup.com](http://www.mydup.com)
- Sinn Féin [www.sinnfein.ie](http://www.sinnfein.ie)
- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) [www.uup.org](http://www.uup.org)
- Social Democrat and Labour Party (SDLP) [www.sdlp.ie](http://www.sdlp.ie)
- Alliance – [www.allianceparty.org](http://www.allianceparty.org)
- Green Party NI [www.greenpartyni.org](http://www.greenpartyni.org)
- Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) [www.tuv.org.uk](http://www.tuv.org.uk)

## Annex 2: Feedback form

Amnesty group and contact (name and email)	
Group twitter handle	
Constituency	
Candidates' names and political party	
Where met (meeting, other hustings, bumped into them on the street...). If sent a letter and received a reply please enclose copies.	
Does the candidate support the Human Rights Act? What did they say about it?	
Did the candidate agree to work towards stopping torture if elected? What did they say about it?	
Did the candidate raise any other human rights issues they are interested in?	
Anything else	

**Annex 3: Template press release – this is based around the candidates signing the pledge. You can adapt this for a hustings or other event.**

Amnesty International XX [town]

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: XXX FEBRUARY 2015**

**XX [town] AMNESTY GROUP CALLS ON XX [town]'S NEXT MP TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**XX XX - MAIN SQUARE**

All XX [number] candidates to be XX [town]'s next MP joined XX [town's] Amnesty group today to show their support for human rights.

The candidates gathered in XX [place] to have their photograph taken with local Amnesty group members and to pledge their support for human rights after the election.

Amnesty members had been encouraging local shoppers to sign up to a human rights pledge to defend human rights at home, and abroad.

XX, who lives in XX [locality] and is the chair of the XX [town] Amnesty group, said:

“Amnesty members know better than most how important it is that human rights are protected globally today. We know that three quarters of governments around the world still use torture, despite promising to abolish it.

“It makes no sense for the UK to insist that other countries like Egypt or China respect human rights, whilst we are busy undermining those same protections here at home.

“We were delighted that XX [candidates] pledged to join the people of XX [town] to fight to protect those rights.”

For more information or to obtain a photograph of the event, contact the group.

**ENDS**

Media contacts

[Add in Your town Amnesty's media contact details, including a mobile number]