

Amnesty International UK

INDIVIDUALS AT RISK CASES



Local Groups: Case Campaigning

Amnesty International was founded as an organisation of people taking action in solidarity with individuals whose rights were being abused. Today, we continue to campaign for prisoners of conscience, human rights defenders, community leaders, social media activists, women's rights champions, and communities under threat from violence or forced eviction.

There are many ways to get involved in case campaigning, including taking part in one-off letter – writing and email actions, sending a card at Christmas time to a prisoner of conscience or receiving an Urgent Action.

Working on a case on a long term basis:

One way that many groups take action on the case of an Individual at Risk is on a long-term basis, by being allocated a case by the Individuals at Risk Programme. Such long term casework gives you the scope to develop your own ideas for action based on the interests, strengths and capacity of your group.

How do I take on a long-term case and where do I go for support?

In 2012 we extended the number of case files available to local groups and in 2013 we will continue to prepare more case files to be made available to local groups.

To be assigned a long-term case please contact the Individuals at Risk Programme:

iar@amnesty.org.uk or call 020 7033 1572. The IAR programme will allocate an appropriate case, and will try to match any preferences that you indicate (region, gender, issue), where possible.

What does taking on a long-term case involve?

When you, as a group, take on a long-term case, you must:

- have a named casefile holder who will take the lead for the case in the group, and share information with the rest of the group as well as reply to communications from coordinators or staff. If this 'casefile holder' changes at any time, you should update the country coordinator and the IAR programme at AIUK.
- at a minimum, send appeal letters to the relevant authorities; when appropriate, also send solidarity messages to the individual (or family, etc) and undertake other actions;
- keep a record of your activities, (such as letter writing, stalls, solidarity actions, local media interest or demonstrations) and outcomes on the case and report on these back to the relevant Country Coordinator on a regular basis, or at least once a year;
- be able to work on the case for a sustained period, and be willing to relinquish work on a case if Amnesty UK or the International Secretariat decides to stop working on it.

Who should I go to about updates on the case and for advice on campaigning activities?

You will be sent a 'casefile document' which outlines the details of the case you have been allocated and should be used to guide your campaigning work. The country coordinator, listed in the document should be your first point on contact for any queries relating to the case and will be there to provide support and guide on creative campaigning ideas. The country coordinator should

The Individuals at Risk Programme : Amnesty International, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.
e: iar@amnesty.org.uk t: 020 7033 1572

also update you on the case, for example, if there has been developments on the situation, or the campaigning targets have changed. Please make sure you keep an eye for these important updates. If you do not hear from the coordinator, please contact the IAR programme (iar@amnesty.org.uk).

How do I get cases for my group's monthly meeting?

There are many ways in which your group can get letter writing actions for use at your local group's meeting. These include:

- Signing up to be allocated a LONG TERM CASE to work on, using the instructions above.
- Writing letters based on URGENT ACTIONS – your group can sign up to receive Urgent Actions (UAs) and write letters on these. UAs are timely, the cases which need our urgent attention, but they generally have several weeks to take action, so could be perfect for a monthly meeting.
- Sign up your group to WORK ON A WORLD REGION – this work is led by our network of Country Coordinators, if you sign up to a region you will receive information on the region, including cases that may need your action in that region.
- THE MAGAZINE comes out on a quarterly basis and includes at least 9 cases for your group to take action on.
- The LOCAL GROUPS MONTHLY MAILING: There is always a letter writing action as part of the groups' monthly mailing which you can use in your meetings.
- If you still need more cases for your meeting, please let the IAR team know and we will provide these for you. Either email iar@amnesty.org.uk or call 020 7033 1572. Please try to give us as much advance notice of your meeting as possible, so we have sufficient time to respond to your request.

Frequently Asked Questions

HOW DOES CAMPAIGNING FOR INDIVIDUALS FIT WITH OTHER PARTS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S WORK, E.G. GLOBAL CAMPAIGNS?

Casework intersects with all of Amnesty International's work. It does not sit apart or in opposition to campaigns, thematic or country work. As the range of human rights issues on which we work has expanded, now to all human rights within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the depth and placement of casework has expanded with it – for example, from Prisoners of Conscience to the inclusion of victims of rape and families at risk of forced eviction.

HOW DOES AI DECIDE WHOSE CASES TO TAKE UP?

Amnesty International receives more requests for assistance than the organization can address, literally tens of thousands per year. There are several over-lapping factors that affect whether we take up a person's case and which actions (public or non-public) we take once the case has been taken up.

WHY ARE THERE CASES OF COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS?

Some human rights violations clearly affect a single person while others are likely to affect a group of people in similar circumstances, such as a local human rights NGO who are facing restrictions on their work, or communities who are facing forced evictions. Our support on such cases can help a larger number of people.

WILL AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL STOP CAMPAIGNING FOR CASES EVEN IF THE VIOLATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLVED?

In some cases Amnesty International will stop campaigning even if the violations have not been resolved. This may be done for several reasons. For example, if there are ethical concerns such as our work endangering the life of the individual or the individual expressing that s/he does not want Amnesty International to work on the case, Amnesty International will stop this work

MY GROUP LIKES TO WORK ON A WIDE VARIETY OF CASES –HOW CAN WE DO THAT?

Listed above you will find different ways in which your group can work on long term cases. Urgent Actions are also highly suitable to use at group meetings, as they are extremely timely, letter writing actions, so both long term and urgent cases can be worked on at a group meeting. For those groups who wish to receive information by post rather than via email, we can arrange that. You can sign up to receive Urgent Actions either by emailing iar@amnesty.org.uk or calling 020 7033 1572.

WHAT ELSE DOES AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DO FOR INDIVIDUALS AT RISK?

Public campaigning is only one way in which Amnesty International assists individuals at risk. Other interventions which members or groups might not see or consider traditional casework can include media and press work; private letters or phone calls to the government or sending AI staff as trial observers.