

FEEDBACK MECHANISM – POLICY AND GUIDELINES

International Secretariat

How we deal with feedback

Amnesty International values feedback from all our stakeholders – our members, partners and supporters, people on whose behalf we work, and the wider public.

We seek to deal with feedback in a respectful, open and responsible way: this is integral to our commitment to transparency and accountability.

Having a mechanism for handling feedback is important to strengthen our transparency and accountability. Learning from those who affect or are affected by aspects of our work will help us improve.

Our feedback mechanism is guided by these principles:

- respect for the person giving feedback;
- confidentiality;
- commitment to learning from feedback.

What does this policy cover?

- Comments or complaints about our mission and values, strategies, policies, objectives, decisions, activities, governance, performance, use of resources, and behaviour of staff, volunteers, activists and Board members;
- This can come from all our stakeholders, except staff and volunteers – this would happen through a separate internal process.

Comment or complaint?

Feedback includes any positive or negative comments, or more formal complaints, from a stakeholder about our mission and values, strategies, policies, objectives, decisions, activities, governance, performance, use of resources, or behaviour of our staff, volunteers, activists and Board members.

We distinguish between **two types** of external feedback: (a) comment; and (b) complaint.

A comment (or general feedback) is an expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, or a suggestion for improvement.

A complaint is a more formal claim that Amnesty International has failed to meet an organisational commitment. For administrative purposes, Amnesty International's International Secretariat (IS) currently defines a complaint as a written or verbal statement against Amnesty International expressing dissatisfaction with

Amnesty International's work and/or policies, and seeking redress by Amnesty International.

The procedures for dealing with these differ:

- A **comment** is acknowledged (in writing or orally) and is used to help the organisation to learn.
- A **complaint** prompts a more formal process aiming for resolution. A complaint requires an investigation, followed by a formal response to the person making the complaint.
- Complaints are also recorded and used to foster organisational learning.

Investigating a complaint uses Amnesty's limited resources, so we expect the person who is making the complaint to:

- provide as much information as possible;
- be willing to be contacted and engage in the resolution process, if necessary;
- understand that making a complaint triggers a formal process which requires resources.

Feedback provided by or concerning a person under 18 will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

What complaints will not be accepted?

If we receive feedback anonymously we will take it into account and use it as an opportunity to learn. We cannot respond to anonymous comments or complaints.

We will not respond to feedback which is:

- abusive or offensive;
- repeatedly stated in a manner not conducive to resolution.

Complaints about human rights violations by a third party (which are not complaints against Amnesty) will be referred to the relevant team for follow-up. However, this should not be used as a substitute for contacting country teams directly and a rapid response is not guaranteed.

What about feedback or complaints about a human rights position Amnesty has taken?

We take very seriously the impartiality, independence and accuracy of our work. We do not take positions on issues outside of our mandate as a human rights organisation and we aim to apply our policies consistently and universally, and to do so irrespective of partisan political considerations. We cannot devote sufficient resources to respond to every criticism about our substantive work, including the many

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conflicts in the world where each side or party feels that our criticisms are unjustified.

Who is responsible for logging feedback?

The Office of the Secretary General (OSG) is responsible for logging feedback and ensuring complaints are investigated.

To whom and how can people address their feedback to Amnesty International?

You can register your feedback by visiting our dedicated feedback page:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/about-us/feedback/>

You can also contact Amnesty International by mail, phone, fax or email.

Amnesty International, 1 Easton Street, London, WC1X 0DW, UK

Telephone: +44 20 74135500

Fax: +44 20 79561157

Email: contactus@amnesty.org

To contact our international offices directly, please visit:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/about-us/contact/>

People giving feedback are requested to give their name and email address.

People can give feedback on behalf of others, as long as they have consent to act on their behalf.

People can give feedback in any language, and where possible, the response will be delivered in that same language.

When can people making a complaint expect a response?

We endeavour to respond to formal complaints in writing as quickly as possible (preferably within two weeks) and then to assess the basis for the complaint within 30 working days. If appropriate the matter will be referred to an Amnesty entity for their investigation and formal response.

Complainants should be informed of any delays (e.g. due to unavailability of relevant staff or referral to national entity). Complaints can also be filed directly with the Amnesty International office in their country. If the complaint is related to the whole movement the matter should be referred to the IS for a formal response.

How do we ensure we learn from feedback?

Through the mechanism and tools provided by Accountable Now (former INGO accountability charter), the Global Strategy and Impact Programme supports OSG to ensure reports on the feedback and complaints received from our stakeholders are adequately recorded and mechanisms are put in place to ensure cross-organisational implementation and learning.

What if someone thinks their complaint about fundraising has not been resolved internally?

Amnesty International entities strive for the highest standards of accountability and transparency in our funding arrangements.

Amnesty International is a member of the Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) in the UK. If a complaint is about fundraising and people are not satisfied with the outcome of our internal procedure, they may contact the FRSB:

Fundraising Standards Board, 1st Floor, 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP, UK

Telephone: +44 845 402 5442

Fax: +44 845 402 5443

Email: info@frsb.org.uk

What if someone thinks that Amnesty has acted illegally on a matter other than fundraising, and that their complaint has not been resolved through our internal procedure?

Our charity activities are regulated by the UK Charity Commission, which acts as an independent regulator. If anyone is dissatisfied with the final appeal outcome and believes the decision constitutes a breach of the law, they can complain to the commission.

Charity Commission, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG, UK

Telephone: +44 845 300 0218

Text phone: +44 845 300 0219

Fax: +44 151 703 1555

Email: enquiries@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

Welcoming feedback, respecting confidentiality

All comments are welcomed and complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and, where appropriate, in the strictest confidence. The name of the person making the complaint will only be disclosed, as necessary, after consultation and agreement. Amnesty will not disclose information on any person under 18 which may identify them or make them vulnerable. Amnesty respects people who complain, and will continue to treat them with consideration, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.