

# STATUTE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

*Not amended by the 24th International Council Meeting  
held in Tróia, Portugal, on 13-21 August 1999*

## OBJECT AND MANDATE

1. *The object of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is to contribute to the observance throughout the world of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

*In pursuance of this object, and recognizing the obligation on each person to extend to others rights and freedoms equal to his or her own, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL adopts as its mandate:*

*To promote awareness of and adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized human rights instruments, the values enshrined in them, and the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and freedoms;*

*To oppose grave violations of the rights of every person freely to hold and to express his or her convictions and to be free from discrimination and of the right of every person to physical and mental integrity, and, in particular, to oppose by all appropriate means irrespective of political considerations:*

- a) the imprisonment, detention or other physical restrictions imposed on any person by reason of his or her political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of his or her ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth or other status, provided that he or she has not used or advocated violence (hereinafter referred to as 'prisoners of conscience'; AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall work towards the release of and shall provide assistance to prisoners of conscience);*
- b) the detention of any political prisoner without fair trial within a reasonable time or any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to internationally recognized norms;*
- c) the death penalty, and the torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons, whether or not the persons affected have used or advocated violence;*
- d) the extrajudicial execution of persons whether or not imprisoned, detained or restricted, and "disappearances", whether or not the persons affected have used or advocated violence.*

## METHODS

2. *In order to achieve the aforesaid object and mandate, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall:*
  - a) at all times make clear its impartiality as regards countries adhering to the*

*different world political ideologies and groupings;*

- b) promote as appears appropriate the adoption of constitutions, conventions, treaties and other measures which guarantee the rights contained in the provisions referred to in Article 1 hereof;*
- c) support and publicize the activities of and cooperate with international organizations and agencies which work for the implementation of the aforesaid provisions;*
- d) take all necessary steps to establish an effective organization of sections, affiliated groups and individual members;*
- e) secure the adoption by groups of members or supporters of individual prisoners of conscience or entrust to such groups other tasks in support of the object and mandate set out in Article 1;*
- f) provide financial and other relief to prisoners of conscience and their dependants and to persons who have lately been prisoners of conscience or who might reasonably be expected to be prisoners of conscience or to become prisoners of conscience if convicted or if they were to return to their own countries, to the dependants of such persons and to victims of torture in need of medical care as a direct result thereof;*
- g) provide legal aid, where necessary and possible, to prisoners of conscience and to persons who might reasonably be expected to be prisoners of conscience or to become prisoners of conscience if convicted or if they were to return to their own countries, and, where desirable, send observers to attend the trials of such persons;*
- h) publicize the cases of prisoners of conscience or persons who have otherwise been subjected to disabilities in violation of the aforesaid provisions;*
- i) investigate and publicize the disappearance of persons where there is reason to believe that they may be victims of violations of the rights set out in Article 1 hereof;*
- j) oppose the sending of persons from one country to another where they can reasonably be expected to become prisoners of conscience or to face torture or the death penalty;*
- k) send investigators, where appropriate, to investigate allegations that the rights of individuals under the aforesaid provisions have been violated or threatened;*
- l) make representations to international organizations and to governments whenever it appears that an individual is a prisoner of conscience or has otherwise been subjected to disabilities in violation of the aforesaid provisions;*
- m) promote and support the granting of general amnesties of which the*

beneficiaries will include prisoners of conscience;

n) adopt any other appropriate methods for the securing of its object and mandate.

### **ORGANIZATION**

3. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is an organization based on worldwide voluntary membership and it shall consist of sections, affiliated groups and individual members.
4. The directive authority for the conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is vested in the International Council.
5. Between meetings of the International Council, the International Executive Committee shall be responsible for the conductor the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and for the implementation of the decisions of the International Council.
6. The day-to-day affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall be conducted by the International Secretariat headed by a Secretary General under the direction of the International Executive Committee.
7. The office of the International Secretariat shall be in London or such other place as the International Executive Committee shall decide and which is ratified by at least one half of the sections.
8. Responsibility for AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL work on violations of human rights in any country or territory, including the collection and evaluation of information, and the sending of delegations, lies with the international governing bodies of the organization, and not with the section, groups or members in the country or territory concerned.

### **SECTIONS**

9. A section of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL may be established in any country, state, territory or region with the consent of the International Executive Committee. In order to be recognized as such, a section shall (a) prior to its recognition have demonstrated its ability to organize and maintain basic AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL activities, (b) consist of not less than two groups and 20 members, (c) submit its statute to the International Executive Committee for approval, (d) pay such annual fee as may be determined by the International Council, (e) be registered as such with the International Secretariat on the decision of the International Executive Committee. Sections shall take no action on matters that do not fall within the stated object and mandate of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of sections. Sections shall act in accordance with the working rules and guidelines

that are adopted from time to time by the International Council.

10. Groups of not less than five members may, on payment of an annual fee determined by the International Council, become affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL or a section thereof. Any dispute as to whether a group should be or remain affiliated shall be decided by the International Executive Committee. An affiliated adoption group shall accept for adoption such prisoners as may from time to time be allotted to it by the International Secretariat, and shall adopt no others as long as it remains affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. No group shall be allotted a prisoner of conscience detained in its own country. Each section shall maintain and make available to the International Secretariat a register of affiliated AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL groups. Groups in a country, state, territory or region without a section shall be registered with the International Secretariat. Groups shall take no action on matters that do not fall within the stated object and mandate of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. Groups shall act in accordance with the working rules and guidelines that are adopted from time to time by the International Council.

#### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

11. Individuals residing in countries, **states, territories or regions** where there is no section may, on payment to the International Secretariat of an annual subscription fee determined by the International Executive Committee, become members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL with the consent of the International Executive Committee. In countries where a section exists, individuals may become international members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL with the consent of the section and of the International Executive Committee. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of such members.

#### **INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL**

12. The International Council shall consist of the members of the International Executive Committee and of representatives of sections and shall meet at intervals of not more than two years on a date fixed by the International Executive Committee. Only representatives of sections shall have the right to vote at the International Council.

13. All sections shall have the right to appoint one representative to the International Council and in addition may appoint representatives as follows:

10 — 49 groups: 1 representative  
50 — 99 groups: 2 representatives  
100 — 199 groups: 3 representatives  
200 — 399 groups: 4 representatives  
400 groups and over: 5 representatives

Sections consisting primarily of individual members rather than groups may as an alternative appoint additional representatives as follows:

500 — 2,499 members: 1 representative

*2,500 members and over: 2 representatives*

*Only sections having paid in full their annual fee as assessed by the International Council for the two previous financial years shall vote at the International Council. This requirement may be waived in whole or in part by the International Council.*

- 14. One representative of each group not forming part of a section may attend a meeting of the International Council as an observer and may speak thereat but shall not be entitled to vote.*
- 15. A section unable to participate at an International Council may appoint a proxy or proxies to vote on its behalf and a section represented by a lesser number of persons than its entitlement under Article 13 hereof may authorize its representative or representatives to cast votes up to its maximum entitlement under Article 13 hereof.*
- 16. Notice of the number of representatives proposing to attend an International Council, and of the appointment of proxies, shall be given to the International Secretariat not later than one month before the meeting of the International Council. This requirement may be waived by the International Executive Committee.*
- 17. A quorum shall consist of the representatives or proxies of not less than one quarter of the sections entitled to be represented.*
- 18. The Chairperson of the International Council and an alternate shall be elected by the preceding International Council. The Chairperson or, in his or her absence, the alternate, shall preside at the International Council. In the absence of the Chairperson and the alternate, the Chairperson of the International Executive Committee or such other person as the International Executive Committee may appoint shall open the proceedings of the International Council which shall elect a Chairperson. Thereafter the elected Chairperson, or such other person as the Chairperson may appoint, shall preside at the International Council.*
- 19. Except as otherwise provided in the Statute, the International Council shall make its decisions by a simple majority of the votes cast. In case of an equality of votes the Chairperson of the International Council shall have a casting vote.*
- 20. The International Council shall be convened by the International Secretariat by notice to all sections and affiliated groups not later than 90 days before the date thereof.*
- 21. The Chairperson of the International Executive Committee shall at the request of the Committee or of not less than one third of the sections call an extraordinary meeting of the International Council by giving not less than 21 days' notice in*

writing to all sections.

22. The International Council shall elect a Treasurer, who shall be a member of the International Executive Committee.
23. The agenda for the meetings of the International Council shall be prepared by the International Secretariat under the direction of the Chairperson of the International Executive Committee.

#### **INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

24. a) The International Executive Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, one representative of the staff of the International Secretariat and seven regular members, who shall be members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, or of a section, or of an affiliated group. The regular members and Treasurer shall be elected by the International Council. Not more than one member of any section or affiliated group or member of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL voluntarily resident in a country, **state, territory or region** may be elected as a regular member to the Committee, and once such member has received sufficient votes to be elected, any votes cast for other members of that section, affiliated group or country shall be disregarded.
  - b) Members of the permanent staff, paid and unpaid, shall have the right to elect one representative among the staff who has completed not less than two years' service to be a voting member of the International Executive Committee. Such member shall hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-election. The method of voting shall be subject to approval by the International Executive Committee on the proposal of the staff members.
25. The International Executive Committee shall meet not less than twice a year at a place to be decided by itself.
  26. Members of the International Executive Committee, other than the representative of the staff, shall hold office for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-election for a maximum tenure of three consecutive terms.
  27. The Committee may co-opt not more than two additional members who shall hold office until the close of the next meeting of the International Council; they shall be eligible to be re-co-opted once. Co-opted members shall not have the right to vote.
  28. In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Committee, other than in respect of the representative of the staff, it may co-opt a further member to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the International Council, which shall elect such members as are necessary to replace retiring members and to fill the vacancy. In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Committee in respect of the

representative of the staff, the staff shall have the right to elect a successor representative to fill the unexpired term of office.

29. If a member of the Committee is unable to attend a meeting, such member may appoint an alternate.
30. The Committee shall each year appoint one of its members to act as Chairperson.
31. The Chairperson may, and at the request of the majority of the Committee shall, summon meetings of the Committee.
32. A quorum shall consist of not fewer than five members of the Committee or their alternates.
33. The agenda for meetings of the Committee shall be prepared by the International Secretariat under the direction of the Chairperson.
34. The Committee may make regulations for the conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and for the procedure to be followed at the International Council.

#### **INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

35. The International Executive Committee may appoint a Secretary General who shall be responsible under its direction for the conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and for the implementation of the decisions of the International Council.
36. The Secretary General may appoint senior executive staff in close cooperation with the International Executive Committee, and may appoint all other staff as are necessary for the proper conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.
37. In the case of the absence or illness of the Secretary General, or of a vacancy in the post of Secretary General, the Chairperson of the International Executive Committee shall, after consultation with the members of that Committee, appoint an Acting Secretary General to act until the next meeting of the Committee.
38. The Secretary General or Acting Secretary General and such members of the International Secretariat as may appear to the Chairperson of the International Executive Committee to be necessary shall attend meetings of the International Council and of the International Executive Committee and may speak thereat but shall not be entitled to vote.

#### **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

39. Membership of or affiliation to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL may be terminated at any time by resignation in writing.
40. The International Executive Committee may deprive a section, affiliated group

(Article 10) or a member (Article 11) of membership of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL if in its opinion that section, affiliated group or member does not act within the spirit of the object, mandate and methods set out in Articles 1 and 2 or does not organize and maintain basic AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL activities or does not observe any of the provisions of this Statute. Before taking such action, the section, affiliated group or member and, when the deprivation of membership of a section is considered, all other sections will be informed in writing of the grounds on which it is proposed to deprive it or such person of membership, and such section, affiliated group or member shall be provided with an opportunity of presenting its or such member's case to the International Executive Committee. Once the International Executive Committee has decided to take such action in respect of a section, affiliated group or member, the section, affiliated group or member may appeal to the Membership Appeals Committee. This committee shall consist of five members and two alternate members who shall be elected by the International Council in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as provided for in Article 24 a) for the International Executive Committee. Once deprived of membership, a section, affiliated group or member may no longer use the name of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

#### FINANCE

41. An auditor appointed by the International Council shall annually audit the accounts of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, which shall be prepared by the International Secretariat and presented to the International Executive Committee and the International Council.
42. No part of the income or property of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall directly or indirectly be paid or transferred otherwise than for valuable and sufficient consideration to any of its members by way of dividend, gift, division, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit.

#### AMENDMENTS OF STATUTE

43. The Statute may be amended by the International Council by a majority of not less than two thirds of the votes cast. Amendments may be submitted by the International Executive Committee or by a section. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the International Secretariat not less than nine months before the International Council meets, and presentation to the International Council shall be supported in writing by at least five sections. Proposed amendments shall be communicated by the International Secretariat to all sections and to members of the International Executive Committee.