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Preface

How to Use This Handbook

This is the seventh edition of the Amnesty International Handbook. It is a basic reference manual for Amnesty International (AI) members.

While new AI members should not feel obliged to read and to immediately digest all the detailed information in this handbook, members are expected to be generally familiar with the background, policies and rules that are explained in it.

Every active member of AI should have regular access to a copy of this manual.

Please Copy This Book

Many parts of this handbook are organized into self-contained units that are designed to encourage copying and widespread use by AI members in their continuing activities. For example:

- * Chapter 1 can be modified to serve as a pamphlet giving a general introduction to the work of AI

- * relevant parts of Chapter 3 can be photocopied and distributed in the form of handouts to help explain AI's mandate to new members

- * the short units of information in Chapter 5 can be adapted to create practical guides for activists in carrying out specific types of human rights campaigning in their community (to make each of these units as self-contained as possible, certain key guidelines, such as coordination of activities and security of information, are repeated at appropriate points)

- * the Appendix comprises the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a short summary of international human rights law, the AI Statute, a bibliography and a glossary, each of which can be duplicated and used in the training of AI's members

This handbook is an EXTERNAL AI document -- it does not contain sensitive information about individuals or about the organization, and it can be circulated without restriction. Feel free to reproduce any of the material.

For More Information

AI is a constantly changing movement. Its diversity and its flexibility help to make the organization strong and effective. Therefore this handbook can never be a definitive document.

To find out about any current policy or to obtain advice on particular problems, consult the appropriate body in the organization. In the absence of specific instructions, direct your question in this way:

* If there is an AI section or national coordinating structure in your country, contact the section office or the appropriate coordinator. If these people are not able to answer your question, they will forward it to AI's International Secretariat.

* If there is no AI section or national coordinating structure in your country, contact the International Secretariat direct:

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

Telephone (071) 413-5500
FAX (071) 956-1157

This handbook uses plain language to explain AI's position on human rights questions and how it works to correct these problems. It does not replace the organization's formal policy documents or the texts of its official decisions. To obtain these documents and texts, consult the Amnesty International Policy Manual or your section office.

The handbook has been prepared by the movement's International Secretariat with the help of the English-speaking branch of the Canadian Section. It is available in various languages and local editions. You can obtain copies from the International Secretariat or from your section office.

Chapter 1

AI IN THE 1990s

A Force for Freedom and Dignity

This chapter tells the story of Safia Hashi Madar. It describes how AI members around the world played a part in helping to rescue her from torture and unfair imprisonment.

This chapter also explains how ordinary people can create pressure that will influence powerful governments to stop their violations

of human rights.

AI IN THE 1990s

A Force for Freedom and Dignity

Safia's Story

When Safia Hashi Madar was nine months pregnant, the police came to her home in the middle of the night and dragged her away to prison.

This happened in Somalia in 1985. Safia, a bio-chemist, was separated from her husband, her elderly mother, and her two-year-old son, Ahmed.

Just three days after being arrested, Safia gave birth to another son. She named him Abdi. The security forces took the baby from her at once, and they sent Safia back to her cell.

Safia had been torn from her entire family. Now she found herself in a dark and damp chamber, with no basin or mattress, and alone.

Safia had not committed any crime. In fact, it is still not clear why she was arrested. Apparently, she was jailed because she had criticized the authorities, and also because she belonged to the Isaaq clan, many of whose members opposed the government. The Somali military had murdered large numbers of unarmed civilians from this ethnic group.

In the early days of her imprisonment, Safia was tortured regularly. She was kicked and choked, beaten with sticks, and burned with cigarettes.

After being held for ten months, she was brought to trial at last. By any legal standard, however, her trial was unfair.

Army and security officers, not civilians, conducted the hearing. They denied Safia access to a lawyer. When she pleaded not guilty to the charge -- of belonging to a "subversive organization" -- the court dismissed her plea outright. The conviction was swift and the sentence severe: life imprisonment. Safia was not allowed to make an appeal.

AI Alerted

By this time, AI had learned of Safia's plight. After confirming the facts, the organization decided that she was a prisoner of conscience, that is, that she was confined solely because of her beliefs or her identity, and not for any violent act she might have committed.

The organization asked members of three AI groups, each one based

in a different country, to launch public campaigns for Safia's release. These groups "adopted" her and promised to put relentless pressure on the Somali authorities until she was set free.

These volunteers wrote hundreds of letters and postcards to the Somali Government. They asked their friends and neighbours to write letters too. They sent telegrams. They publicized the story in their local newspapers and on radio and television. They raised money to help pay for more appeals on Safia's behalf.

Meanwhile, the torture had stopped, but the prison conditions remained harsh. Safia's health grew very bad and she suffered a number of painful illnesses. Despite her misery, she received no medical care.

In response, AI alerted the three local groups that had been working on the case. It also increased the pressure. It asked large numbers of its members around the world to send emergency appeals.

One of these people was Shelagh Macdonald, a Canadian living in the United States, and herself a young mother. Shelagh and the other members of her AI group approached medical professionals, students, and politicians, and asked them to send urgent pleas to Somalia.

Before long, the Somali Minister of Health had received countless messages of concern from all parts of the world. The pressure worked, and within a month Safia had received medical treatment.

Another year passed, however, and Safia was still in prison. Shelagh and many AI members worldwide continued to protest Safia's detention.

Free!

On International Women's Day, 1989, AI again asked its members to demand Safia's freedom. And again, volunteers in many places sent scores of letters and telegrams to the authorities in Somalia.

It was soon after this campaign that at long last Safia was set free. She had spent four years as a prisoner of conscience.

Her release from prison was only the first step in putting her life back together. Her safety was still under threat in Somalia. After a dangerous escape from the country and a period during which she was a refugee, Safia was finally reunited with her husband, her mother, and her two sons.

The family settled near London, England and began to look forward to the day when they would be able to return to their own country and to resume their lives there in peace and security.

"Each of us knows what it is like to read an Amnesty account that

fails to move us; perhaps we are too busy, perhaps we can't bear any more just then, perhaps we feel too remote.

"Then there are other times when we read about a person in prison, and her or his story reaches inside our soul.

"As a mother of young children, I felt a strong and instinctive connection with this woman ... "

- Shelagh Macdonald

Human Rights Abuses - A Story That is Too Familiar

Safia's is a remarkable tale, a story of a determined and courageous spirit surviving in the face of overwhelming persecution.

One part of her story, unfortunately, is terribly familiar, especially to members of AI. The denial of Safia's freedom and the abuse of her dignity and physical integrity are as commonplace as they are horrible.

The world has heard -- too often -- reports of pain and degradation inflicted upon individuals by state authorities who disapprove of their opinions or background.

In many periods of history, in many parts of the world, powerful officials have jailed their opponents. They have held sham trials and condemned innocent people. They have tortured and executed prisoners. They have murdered their enemies. They have forced people to flee their own homes and countries in order to find a safe place.

Even today, such horrors still happen. Governments of every type -- left and right, democracy and dictatorship -- are guilty of such crimes. Even while they profess a respect for human rights, governments continue to inflict these outrages. They commit these crimes upon rich and poor, famous and unknown, political dissidents and average citizens, women, men, and even children.

A Conspiracy of Hope

The truly remarkable part of Safia's story is this: a network of quite "ordinary" people from many countries joined together to help her and her relatives. These people had never met her, yet they rallied -- internationally -- and gave their time and energy to demanding that her jailers let her go free.

World history is filled with official persecutions of "conspirators". Considered in the broad sweep of this history, the conspiracy of concern that was mounted on Safia's behalf is unique. It is a conspiracy of hope.

People have always hurried to come to the aid of their own family,

friends and neighbours -- of those near and known to them. And high-level officials have often made humanitarian appeals to their counterparts in other countries.

It is only during the last half of the 20th century, however, that the world community has seen the growth of an international demand for human rights on the part of the broad mass of the people.

In revulsion against the atrocities of World War II, the world began to create a formal machinery of human rights -- global laws to affirm the value of the individual person, and global institutions to enforce these laws.

So far, unfortunately, this machinery has not been as effective as it should be. Until it is made stronger, one essential alternative exists. This alternative is the force of aroused public opinion -- the indignation of concerned people everywhere.

The fundamental basis of AI's approach is the belief that large numbers of activists, raising their voices together in determined protest, can protect people in danger in other countries.

The movement's volunteer system makes it possible for everyone to speak up and to take part in the struggle for human dignity. Before AI was formed, there was no institution that could have generated mass, global pressure to protect victims of political oppression like Safia Hashi Madar and her family.

Shining a Light

Governments like to hide their oppression. They commit their crimes behind thick walls, in remote cells -- in darkness.

AI's method is simple: it shines a light upon these crimes.

AI turns the light of public attention upon the individuals who are the victims and upon the authorities who torment them. It mobilizes people worldwide to protest directly to these officials and to create publicity so that others are encouraged to join in the protest.

This plain but powerful tactic lets people in power know that they are being watched, that they will be called upon to explain their actions.

This method is effective. Over the years, the movement has taken up tens of thousands of individual cases, and most of them have been resolved. These people are now free from unfair imprisonment, their torture stopped, their lives secured.

During the same period, AI has helped create safeguards that aim to prevent people ever again suffering such horrors. In the 1990s, more and more governments are agreeing to abide by international human rights standards. And thanks to the efforts of AI and other

organizations, human rights issues are now being discussed in the news media every day. AI has helped to put human rights on the world's agenda.

The organization itself has grown to be large and influential. It now has more than a million members, subscribers and donors. Millions more support its goals. Thousands of local groups have been formed. AI has established a presence in most countries of the world.

AI has been honoured with awards such as the Nobel Peace Prize. It is allowed to present its concerns formally to the United Nations and other international bodies. Its reports are distributed widely. Even those officials who are the targets of its campaigns have admitted that AI is independent and impartial, and that its information is accurate.

The 20th century has shown that an international human rights movement can be effective, that many people working together can make a difference, that change can happen.

Does AI work? Listen to some of the people for whom AI has taken action:

"Your efforts saved my life." - South Korea

"Many children are still alive and able to enjoy freedom thanks to Amnesty International." - Chile

"Your kindness and ongoing support saved me from the executioner."
- United States of America

"Your efforts have borne fruit of justice. - Philippines

"Without your support, I would not have survived the prison brutality."
- Kenya

"Amnesty has been of the utmost importance in our case." - Iran

"Words cannot explain what kind of intense morale Amnesty International members have given me." - Turkey

The Next Step

Now that this movement has taken root, it is useful to recall that, once upon a time, people ridiculed the very idea of an organization like AI.

They dismissed the notion that unknown people, most of them with little political or economic power, could together change the behaviour of brutal governments. They were sceptical that such a goal could be

achieved simply by writing polite letters. The very idea, they said, was a naive, romantic and sentimental absurdity. AI was called "one of the larger lunacies of our time".

As the world enters into a new century, it is time to prepare for the next step. It is time to bring to pass other "lunacies" such as these ...

- a world without torture cells
- _ a world without electric chairs and firing squads and the noose
- a world without jails full of prisoners of conscience like Safia Hashi Madar
- a world where people are not forced to flee their own home because the state plans to kidnap and murder them
- a world where every person will have security, freedom, and a decent human existence

Change will happen. All that is needed to achieve this vision -- a vision of a world without cruelty and injustice -- is the determined voices of "ordinary" people.

Chapter 2

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

How AI Makes a Difference

AI is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for human rights. Its appeals on behalf of the victims of human rights violations are based on accurate research and on international law. The organization is independent of all governments and political ideologies.

AI demands the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners, an end to the death penalty, torture, and other cruel treatment, and a stop to extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

To work effectively toward achieving these goals, all AI members should understand the principles on which the practical activities of the organization are based.

This chapter sets out the fundamental philosophy and approach of the movement.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

How AI Makes a Difference

Human Rights, Human Responsibilities

AI's mission is to contribute to the campaign for human rights.

Human rights means this: every person deserves to be treated with dignity. Every person deserves to be safe and secure, and to have the means to meet basic needs such as decent food and shelter.

When we say that one person has human rights, we are really saying that other persons have human responsibilities. Each person bears the responsibility of behaving toward other people in a certain way -- each of us is obliged to respect the inherent human dignity of others.

In other words, any appeal demanding respect for one person's human rights is really an appeal aimed at the behaviour of others.

Because of the specific rights that AI seeks to protect, the organization's appeals are aimed at the behaviour of governments and of others who wield power. The movement insists that governments live up to their responsibility to safeguard the security and to respect

the dignity of human beings. It calls on people everywhere to join with it in making this demand.

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RAHAMANISM: "Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."

- The Mahabharata

BUDDHISM: "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."

- Udana-Varga: 5,18

CHRISTIANITY: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you."

- New Testament. Matthew 7:12

CONFUCIANISM: "Do not unto others that you would not have them do unto you."

- Analects, XV, 23

ISLAM: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."

- Sunnah

JUDAISM: "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellowmen."

- The Talmud, Shabbat, 31a

TAOISM: "Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss."

- T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien

ZOROASTRIANISM: "That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself"

- Dadistan-i-dinik, 94:5

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The Basis for Human Rights

AI's message amounts to nothing less than a blunt demand that powerful officials change the way they behave. The organization must have a sound basis for making such a bold demand.

When asked to give a moral justification for AI's work, AI members, who come from many cultural traditions, will answer in different ways. Most will agree, however, that the movement's demands are grounded, ultimately, in the conviction that every human being has an intrinsic value.

Over the centuries, this conviction has been given considerable authority from many sources -- the dominant beliefs of many diverse cultures, the major world philosophies, and more recently, international declarations and laws.

When AI says that human rights belong to all human beings, it is affirming a universal human value, now inscribed in international law, that every person is entitled to security and dignity -- to human rights -- simply because he or she is a human being.

This means that just as fundamental rights are not given or "granted" by governments, neither can fundamental rights be taken away by governments. Human rights belong -- inherently -- to all human beings.

Human Rights and Law

Human rights and dignity have been the subject of thought and action in many different cultures since ancient times. Throughout history, people have struggled to protect their rights against individuals and institutions who would deny them -- who would deny what is inherently human.

To protect their basic rights -- to safeguard their own security and dignity -- people have demanded that governments affirm these rights in law.

By affirming human rights in law, governments accept responsibility for the protection of human rights.

It is this entrenchment of human rights in official codes -- in both national and international codes of law -- that gives AI the legal basis for its demands.

Human rights standards, including those international standards adopted by governments, set out what governments must do for their citizens, and also what they must not do to their citizens.

In practical terms, these standards usually insist that every person should have life, freedom, and a decent existence.

You have a right to adequate food, clothing, housing, education, and medical care, to work and to adequate rest from it, and to privacy.

You have a right to move freely about your country, to leave and re-enter it, to worship, to marry and found a family, and to gather together with other people.

You have a right to be free from slavery, from torture, and from arbitrary detention and from unfair trial.

When a government official says to AI that the government's abuses are "none of your business", AI can point to the international human rights standards the government has accepted, and can say, "It is not just our movement that is making this demand -- your own government has endorsed these rules of behaviour."

Today, given the existence of human rights standards recognized by the international community, there is no acceptable excuse for a

government to ignore or abuse human rights.

Today, human rights apply to everyone, everywhere -- regardless of the person's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, wealth, or nationality.

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Are human rights a luxury, especially in societies trying to cope with serious problems like poverty and hunger?

AI believes there should be no double standard on human rights.

Human rights must be respected in every society at all times. The protection of human rights is a universal responsibility. It transcends the boundaries of nation, race, and ideology. It transcends any immediate problems a society may be trying to solve.

In fact, without human rights, progress of any kind is hard to achieve. Unless people can carry out political and social action free from persecution, it is difficult, if not impossible, to build a better world.

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Human Rights and International Law

National borders are no barrier to helping others.

International human rights law is the code of conduct of governments around the world. AI's demands spring from this body of law. AI can point to international standards adopted by the United Nations and it can say, "Not only has your own government endorsed these rules -- so has the whole world."

Furthermore, international human rights law has an international application. It sets out that governments have promised to uphold certain rights not just for their own citizens, but also for people in other countries as well.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, member states pledge to cooperate -- internationally -- to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone.

United Nations member states have endorsed an international responsibility for the universal protection of human rights. All people, in other words, have an obligation to work to protect the human rights of everyone else, regardless of race, nationality, or ideology, regardless of local legal codes, custom, or practice.

AI affirms fully the commitment of the United Nations to the shared

protection of human rights. This is why AI does not accept the argument, used by some governments when they find it convenient, that questions of human rights are the business of the nation concerned, or that AI is "interfering in the internal affairs of states".

The protection of human rights is everybody's business.

The international responsibility for the protection of human rights is a basic assumption grounding the work of AI.

In its letters and appeals, AI points to international human rights standards and reminds governments of their obligation to uphold them.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most widely accepted statement of human rights in the world.

Its core message is the inherent value of human beings.

The Universal Declaration was drafted to give ordinary people a basic measure of protection from the abuse of power by the state.

It is the most important instrument supporting the work of AI, and all members should be familiar with the promises it makes.

The declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. Every year, this date is observed around the world as Human Rights Day.

The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration establish the civil and political rights, and the economic, social and cultural rights of all people.

The Universal Declaration proclaims the right to ...

- * life, liberty and security
- * equality before the law
- * a fair and public trial and the presumption of innocence
- * freedom of movement
- * freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- * freedom of opinion and expression
- * and freedom of assembly and association

It also insists that no one shall ...

- * be held in slavery
- * be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- * or be arbitrarily arrested, detained or exiled

Furthermore, it establishes that everyone has the right ...

- * to a nationality
- * to marry
- * to own property
- * to take part in the government of his or her country
- * to work, and to receive equal pay for equal work
- * to enjoy rest and leisure
- * and to have an adequate standard of living and education

Finally, the Universal Declaration states that everyone has the right to form and join trade unions and the right to seek asylum from persecution.

The full text of the declaration is provided in the Appendix.

Enforcement of Human Rights Standards

Even though it is the inspiration for most international human rights law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is itself not legally binding, but a statement of principle. Nevertheless, the ideals it expresses have become so firmly entrenched in international law that its provisions have acquired real force. This has happened in several ways:

- * Most countries, simply by virtue of being members of the United Nations, are considered to have accepted the principles of the declaration. Under the Charter of the United Nations, member states pledge to promote observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the declaration is an authoritative statement of those rights and freedoms.

- * In their resolutions, the General Assembly and the human rights bodies of the United Nations repeatedly call for full implementation of and respect for the declaration.

- * The principles of the declaration are given a more specific expression in the two covenants that spring from it. These are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and

the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The latter covenant forms the legal basis for much of the work of AI. It is equipped with formal enforcement mechanisms that make it possible for those governments that accept the authority of these mechanisms to be called to account for their human rights performance.

* The United Nations has implemented the principles of the declaration in dozens of other standards, many of which have enforcement mechanisms. Among these are the Convention against Torture, and conventions on the elimination of racial discrimination and of discrimination against women.

In parallel with the international system, regional human rights instruments, and institutions for ensuring compliance with them, have been developed by the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, and the Council of Europe.

For a summary of international human rights law, see the Appendix.

* Finally, many nations are weaving these rights, which found their legal expression initially in covenants between states, into the fabric of their own constitutions and domestic laws. The process will take a long time, but it is fair to say that international human rights law is slowly becoming world human rights law.

The Need for AI

Even though states are making laws to protect human rights, governments often do not have the interest or the will to enforce these laws. Governments find excuses to ignore their responsibilities. They fail to protect their own citizens, and they fail to stand up for the citizens of other countries.

In AI's experience, most of the member states of the United Nations -- countries that affirm the Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- regularly violate some of those rights.

Furthermore, governments frequently make laws that themselves ignore human rights standards -- this is why AI sometimes works on behalf of people who have broken their own country's laws.

If the protection of the forgotten victims was left entirely to the state, in many cases the victims would have no protection at all.

Organizations like AI are necessary because often there is no one else to speak up against human rights violations.

Often, it is only mass international pressure -- the pressure of large numbers of ordinary people -- that can rescue those who suffer at the hands of state power.

The Universal Declaration and AI

While it supports the struggle for all human rights, AI works actively only on behalf of specific rights.

AI holds that all human rights are equally important. It endorses all 30 articles of the Universal Declaration. AI's formal campaigning activities, however, focus upon certain civil and political rights.

The articles of the declaration that support AI's work proclaim the right to life, liberty, security of person, equality before the law, fair trial, the right to be presumed innocent unless proved guilty, to freedom of movement, expression, conscience and religion, and association, and the right not to be tortured, arbitrarily arrested or detained, or exiled.

AI gives its attention to certain grave violations of these rights -- to abuses such as arbitrary detention, torture, and state killing.

AI is faced with an enormous scale of such abuses. Although it has grown to become the largest and most active human rights monitor in the world, its resources are adequate to research, document and campaign against only a fraction of the civil and political violations that concern it. The strength of AI's pressure depends on its accuracy and credibility, and were AI to expand the scope of its work into other areas its overall effectiveness may be damaged.

AI cannot combat all the injustice in the world.

While AI works on behalf of specific human rights, it believes that all human rights are interdependent. Improvements in fundamental civil and political rights -- such as the right to freedom of speech and the right to be free from arbitrary detention -- make it easier for people to improve their social and economic rights.

Often, AI works indirectly for social and economic rights by defending those who work directly for them. When people are free to meet, to organize, to demonstrate, to publish, and to speak without fear of imprisonment or torture or execution, they are in a stronger position to campaign on behalf of whatever social and economic issues may need attention in their own countries.

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" ... Through its activity for the defence of human worth against degrading treatment, violence and torture, Amnesty International has contributed to securing the ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world."

- Nobel Committee, on awarding AI the Nobel Peace Prize, 1977

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AI does not comment or take action on issues outside this mandate. It leaves other human rights problems to other organizations that are better equipped to deal with them.

Over the years, AI has been asked to expand its role and to take a stand on a variety of issues, including such civil and political rights as the right to vote and the right to be free from censorship.

To these appeals AI's answer has been sympathetic, but firm. The movement accepts the importance of these issues and the gravity of these violations. It believes that all human rights are indispensable, and it recognizes that they are interdependent.

In order to get results, however, the movement has chosen to concentrate on specific human rights.

When AI began in 1961, its focus was on prisoners of conscience. Later, it gave its attention to a wider spectrum of human rights relating to prisoners. Today, in its continuing campaign against certain grave violations of fundamental human rights, it works not only on behalf of prisoners, but on behalf of victims of particular human rights violations who may not be prisoners.

Periodically, new areas are brought into AI's mandate by the decisions of the movement's governing body, the International Council Meeting. These changes are agreed only after careful consideration to ensure that AI's focus remains clear and its action remains practical.

Chapter 3 will explain AI's mandate in detail.

Membership: Making Mass Public Pressure

AI is a membership organization, open to anyone who supports its goals.

People who want to join the struggle for human rights do not need to have special knowledge or skills. All they need is a basic human concern for others.

Like most human rights monitors, AI employs many professionals, experts, and specialists. AI is a research institute, a documentation centre, a publicist, a legal office, a fund-raiser, and a high-level lobbyist.

This professional core exists, however, to back up a very much larger movement of unpaid activists. AI's mass membership is one of the things that make it different from many other human rights organizations.

AI embraces over a million activists and many millions of supporters around the world. These people come from all cultures and walks of life, and they reflect a range of viewpoints. They are encouraged to take part as fully as possible in AI's many actions and projects. They also join in AI's democratic decision-making and they elect the

movement's governing bodies.

Although most of these volunteers are not professional activists, they play a central role in the movement's ongoing campaign -- they build awareness and concern about human rights in their communities.

Frequently, outraged public opinion is the first line of defence for those who are threatened with political imprisonment, torture, and execution. Often, mass public pressure is the only way that human rights can be improved.

The efforts of volunteers will make a greater impact when these activists work together. By sharing information and taking joint actions, they can create far more pressure -- mass, global pressure -- than they would be able to create as individuals working alone.

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"Greetings Amnesty International. I have come home from prison and am very, very grateful ... Mainly I owe my early release to you and to your work on my case ... Thank you for all your support."
- Anto Kovacevic, a released prisoner of conscience from Yugoslavia
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Campaigning: AI Takes Action

AI is a campaigning organization.

AI is well known for researching, documenting, and reporting human rights violations, but its work does not end there. AI members create mass pressure worldwide and take practical, effective action to stop these violations.

AI is organized to make it possible for ordinary people to speak up -- to protest on behalf of other human beings who are in danger. In line with the movement's focus on individual victims, the membership takes action through a global web of small, community-based working groups.

The goals of AI action are protection, prevention, and promotion.

AI campaigns to protect the individual victims who are threatened now. AI says to powerful officials: "You are being watched. We can see your crimes and we plan to tell the world about them. You will be called to account."

It works to prevent further human rights abuses by urging changes in legislation and policy.

And it works to promote long-term awareness of human rights issues

by encouraging educational programs about human rights.

AI volunteer campaigners -- even though they may be "ordinary people" with little political influence in their own countries -- can take several practical steps to put pressure on powerful governments abroad.

AI members ...

- * create publicity in the local news media -- publicity that they can bring to the notice of the target government

- * send masses of letters, telegrams, and postcards appealing directly to the target government's senior officials

- * approach the home government and encourage their own political representatives to take up the cause

- * reach out to influential groups and individuals in the community and invite them to lend their powerful voices to the campaigning

- * hold dramatic, symbolic events that will get people's attention and mobilize them to support these efforts

- * ask people to donate money and materials that will not only help keep the campaigning going, but will strengthen the independence and credibility of its message

These different realms of activity complement and reinforce one another. Since the ultimate goal is to create pressure to help victims of human rights abuses, every one of these is a real human rights task.

These campaigning techniques are described in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Face of AI

AI is independent and impartial, and aims to be truly universal.

These principles are closely related and they are woven into all AI's practical work. They are vital to the organization's credibility and effectiveness.

They might be called "external" working principles because they relate to the way AI should be seen as it goes about its tasks.

Independence

AI is a democratic, self-governing movement. It is free from outside

" ... frustrated old women and young people ... " - Attorney General, Kenya, 1977
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In opposing the death penalty, is AI opposing certain religious beliefs?

AI counts among its members believers from all major faiths. The movement takes no position, however, on any religious system, nor does it present its appeals to governments in terms of the teachings of any religious tradition.

The idea of "human rights" developed from a mixture of sacred and secular beliefs held by many societies for many centuries. Among these universal principles are that people have inherent value, and that we should treat others the way we would like them to treat us.

Such widespread convictions have found their expression in the humanitarian articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On the one hand, some governments justify their human rights violations -- for example, their use of the death penalty -- by referring to religious teachings.

On the other hand, each of the major faiths includes certain teachings that some people regard as the basis for their opposition to human rights violations -- such as the death penalty.

This means that a good member of any faith can also, on the basis of the teachings of that faith, be a good member of AI.

Because AI does not make religious arguments in its appeals, it does not quote these teachings. It will, however, encourage members of religious communities to use these teachings in trying to convince others of their own faith about AI's mandate.

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Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or

territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2

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Universality

Borders are no barrier to helping others.

AI believes that each one of us can play a role in protecting the rights of everyone else, regardless of who we are, what we believe, or where we live. The defence of human rights is the concern of the entire world, and it transcends differences of nationality, race, or belief.

Ideologies, national boundaries, and local legal codes are no obstacle to speaking out on behalf of others. As far as AI is concerned, it is entirely appropriate for human rights activists to try to influence the "internal affairs" of other countries. It is appropriate because these "internal affairs" are really fundamental and universal human affairs.

AI is not a union of local civil liberties bodies, whose national affiliates and members focus on human rights problems in their own states. It is, instead, an international movement of mutual support.

AI's universality means that the organization takes action --internationally -- wherever and whenever it receives information about violations of the human rights that fall within its mandate.

Working Methods

AI's effectiveness depends on its credibility.

The organization has an international presence, and any statement or activity by members in one country can affect the way the movement is seen by the public in other countries.

AI members take care to speak and act in a way that safeguards the movement's independence, impartiality, and universality. The organization has developed practical working methods that are vital to protecting the credibility of its statements and strengthening the impact of its activities.

* AI action is grounded in accurate research, not in hearsay, rumour, or biased or slanted reports.

The movement's information must conform to the highest standards of

accuracy. Whenever AI hears a report of political arrests or of people threatened with torture or execution, it concentrates first on examining the allegations.

The researchers employed by its International Secretariat in London gather information from relatives of the victims of human rights violations, and from lawyers, journalists, and other human rights organizations -- from every reliable source. Each piece of information is carefully checked. Only when the researchers are sure they have a solid basis for concern do they send the information to AI members and to the public.

In redistributing any AI information, sections, groups and members should take care to do nothing that might jeopardize its accuracy and reliability, and thereby damage the movement's credibility and effectiveness.

* The organization refuses to express a partisan opinion or take part in political speculation, and it avoids commenting on a government's motives or on the underlying reasons for human rights abuses.

AI is not a political support group and does not endorse any other cause.

AI's information is always presented in a way that makes it clear that the movement does not support or oppose any government or political system, take sides in political conflicts, or endorse the views of the people whose rights it seeks to protect.

AI members do not -- and must not -- make partisan statements such as referring to governments as "regimes" or "dictatorships", or describing their leaders as "reactionary", "fanatical", or "despotic".

* AI does not rank or compare violations of human rights.

Countries are not graded as the "best" or the "worst" in terms of their human rights records. AI does not maintain a "blacklist". It concentrates on trying to end the specific violations of human rights in each case.

* AI takes no money from governments. It is financially self-sufficient on the basis of broad-based fund-raising.

AI neither seeks nor accepts money from governments for its operating budget. Rules about accepting donations are strict. They ensure that funds received by any part of the organization do not affect its integrity, make it dependent on any donor, or limit its freedom of activity.

* No member who holds a high post with any government or political party can take a leading position in AI.

To safeguard the movement's political independence, members of AI's

national governing bodies or senior staff persons may not hold top-level positions in the government or public administration of any country, or in the top ruling bodies of any political party.

* In its overall program, each local AI group is expected to work on human rights concerns across the geo-political spectrum.

Each group is expected to take action as far as possible on different regions of the world and on contrasting ideological contexts.

In practice, this may mean, for example, that a group based in France might adopt a prisoner of conscience held in an African prison, take part in a country campaign aimed at a concern in the Americas, and work to abolish the death penalty in an Asian country.

Human Rights Violations In Members' Own Countries

When AI receives a report of a human rights violation, the report is centrally evaluated and then it is taken up by members throughout the world -- but not by members working on behalf of AI in the country where the abuse has taken place.

This practice is known as the "work-on-own-country" rule:

***** AI members, in their AI capacities, do not gather, assess, or act upon information about human rights cases in their own country.

The purpose of this rule is to maintain the movement's independence and impartiality. It establishes -- and it demonstrates -- an objective "distance" between the activist and the human rights concern.

This practice is particularly important when AI deals with allegations of torture, unfair trial or imprisonment, political killings or "disappearances", which are often surrounded by controversy and official denials.

The rule ...

* ensures that AI retains its essential character as an international movement of mutual support rather than becoming a federation of national human rights organizations

* helps protect AI's campaigning presence in countries where human rights have been grossly violated

* maintains a clear distinction between AI and domestic civil liberties bodies

* ensures that local pressures and loyalties do not damage AI's impartiality

This rule applies at every level of the movement, to volunteer members as well as to staff. It can be explained in two parts:

---> AI members do not, in AI's name, gather information about human rights violations that take place in their own country.

Despite the fact that AI national bodies, local groups and members may be in the best position to do so, the organization does not involve them in gathering information on their own countries.

Information about human rights violations is collected and evaluated at the organization's central research office, the International Secretariat. Even there, individual researchers are not permitted to work on their own countries.

This research is backed up by fact-finding missions to countries. When an AI research mission is visiting their country, section offices and groups do not take part.

AI members who have information about human rights abuses in any country -- including their own -- may send it for evaluation to the International Secretariat. But they must do this in their private capacities or as members of other organizations. It must be made clear that they are not acting as AI members.

---> AI members do not, in AI's name, campaign against human rights violations that take place in their own country.

Perhaps the best-known application of this practice is that prisoners of conscience are always assigned for adoption to AI groups based in other countries. Even though there may be AI members and groups in that prisoner's country, they will not be expected to take action aimed at helping to free the detainee.

In the spirit of the rule, expatriates of a country that is a target of an AI campaign should avoid taking a leading or visible position in the action. Expatriates should not, for example, sign appeals that will be sent to their former home government.

Again, AI members who wish to protest human rights abuses that fall within AI's mandate and that are taking place in their own country may do so. But they must do this in their private capacities or as members of other organizations. It must be made clear that they are not acting as AI members.

What Members CAN Do

Over the years, AI members have identified a number of areas where they can contribute positively to the human rights situation in their own country in ways that still preserve the fundamental principles of the movement. For example:

* they mount national and local human rights education programs in schools, universities, and the community at large, and they ask their own government to support programs that teach human rights to public officials, police and military personnel

* they campaign for general abolition of the death penalty in their own country (normally the principle of international action on individual cases is respected)

* sections, groups, and members campaign to get their government to ratify international human rights treaties, and (with the approval of AI's International Executive Committee) they campaign to bring domestic laws into line with international human rights standards

* sections and groups translate, stock, and distribute AI's international reports on every country in the world -- including their own

With the aim of preventing their own country from contributing to human rights violations elsewhere, local members:

* take steps to help prevent asylum-seekers being sent back to countries where they risk becoming prisoners of conscience or being tortured, executed, or "disappeared"

* take a stand against the transfer of military, police, or security equipment and expertise to countries where they are used to detain prisoners of conscience or inflict torture or carry out executions (approval from the International Secretariat is needed for such initiatives)

The work-on-own-country rule is important for ensuring the global integrity of AI's work and image. All sections, groups, and members must observe this rule. Exceptions other than those noted must receive the permission of the International Executive Committee. For more information about the application of the rule, please contact your section office or, if there is no section, the International Secretariat.

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Is it wrong to concern ourselves only with human rights in other countries, and not with what goes on in our own?

As AI members, we must observe the principle of the international responsibility for human rights.

Even though we cannot work in AI's name against specific abuses in our own country, we should remember that our AI colleagues around

Over the years, however, AI has received many letters and testimonies from prisoners, or former prisoners, or relatives. These people say that AI's support was important in bringing about an improvement in the situation of a detainee, or else in building up morale and helping a detainee to survive awful prison conditions.

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Letters from Former Prisoners

"Your efforts and prayers saved my life ... " - Lee Shim-bom, Republic of Korea

"You have been present during all these years ... " - Lilian Celiberti, Uruguay

"Amnesty International ... gave me the chance of a new and truly human existence." - Dr. Jan Mlynarik, Czechoslovakia

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Even if governments appear to ignore AI's appeals, this rarely seems to be the case. Regardless of their human rights records, more and more governments are showing sensitivity to international opinion.

Even if a government refuses to acknowledge an appeal, this does not mean it takes no notice. Embassies forward to their home governments articles that appear in local newspapers and magazines. AI fact-finding missions have noted the impression that the thousands of letters have made on government officials.

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AI's Impact on Governments

* After a 1990 campaign on Brazil that drew worldwide attention, the president pledged that "we cannot and will not again be a country cited as violent in reports by Amnesty International".

* AI members in Japan wrote thousands of letters to the South African authorities about a prisoner of conscience who had gone on hunger strike in 1987. No one in the prison could read Japanese, so the authorities translated thousands of letters -- only to discover that they all said "Release Dean Farisani". Reverend Tshenuweni Simon Farisani was set free some months later.

* In Turkey, a man with a long history of being detained and tortured was arrested in October 1990 but set free the following day. As they released him, police officials apparently said, "Oh you're a favourite of Amnesty's aren't you."

* After Norwegian children heard a radio show featuring the case of

a nine-year-old Ethiopian boy who was born and had spent his entire life in prison with his mother, they sent drawings, cards and letters to the AI office in Oslo. A huge parcel was forwarded to the Ethiopian President with a letter asking for the release of the boy and his mother. Five weeks later both were set free.

* In the middle of a meeting with an AI representative, the attorney general of a small Asian country asked his entourage to leave. As soon as the two were alone, the attorney general said, "I have a message for Amnesty International: please keep sending letters. The only thing I can rely on to help me convince the cabinet to spend money on our prisons is the pressure from Amnesty International." When the others returned to the room, the attorney general resumed his bland speech about other matters.

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Every AI member who sends an appeal can be confident the message will have some impact.

The work of AI and other organizations has also had a more long-lasting effect: it has placed human rights on the public agenda.

In recent decades, the international community has adopted an increasing number of human rights declarations, treaties, and other instruments. International human rights law is growing.

Furthermore, the principles of human rights that were first expressed globally or regionally, in agreements among nations, are finding their way into the domestic laws of many countries.

As a result, many countries are establishing official monitoring and enforcement agencies that are responsible for seeing that human rights principles are upheld. A growing body of human rights cases are being settled by national courts and by international bodies.

New non-governmental organizations are being created, and they are becoming more and more effective. During human rights debates at the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies, reports from human rights monitors such as AI are often cited.

In many countries, the media are paying more attention to human rights issues. Almost every day, newspapers or radio or television carry stories about human rights concerns.

AI members and others have promoted a widespread awareness of human rights issues by such means as giving talks and teaching human rights in schools.

AI has helped to create a worldwide "culture" of human rights, a broad base from which to carry the struggle into the 21st century.

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AI is Positive

AI is FOR the right to freedom of conscience without threat of arrest and detention.

It is FOR freedom from torture and execution.

It is FOR the inherent dignity of every person.

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Chapter 3

AI's FOCUS

The Mandate

Many organizations are guided by "mandates" that help them limit and define their work and focus their energies. AI's mandate has four main parts.

These are the specific demands that AI makes of governments everywhere. They express the task the movement has set for itself.

- * release all prisoners of conscience -- people confined because of their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language, who have not used or called for violence
- * give all prisoners whose cases have a political aspect a fair trial within a reasonable time
- * abolish the death penalty, torture, and other cruel treatment of all prisoners
- * end all extrajudicial executions and "disappearances"

Even though it supports all the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, AI mobilizes its worldwide resources for active campaigning in defence of only a limited number of rights.

AI is not an all-purpose human rights movement. It contributes to the overall protection of human rights by defending certain fundamental rights -- rights that people must enjoy.

These are the rights to freedom of conscience and expression, the right to be free from discrimination by reason of ethnic origin, sex, colour, or language, and the right to physical and mental integrity. AI works to stop the gravest violations of these rights -- the use of extreme force such as torture and killings, and the denial of liberty.

Even though the four statements above express these fundamental rights in a simple manner, it is important to note that AI's mandate, while limited, is fairly complex.

All AI members must understand clearly which human rights the movement struggles to uphold. When introducing the organization to others, they must always make it plain exactly what AI does.

This chapter presents the AI mandate in some detail, but it does not try to answer every question. To carry out their own work or to respond to inquiries from the public, members may need more information than is given here. When this is the case, they should consult their

coordination group or section office, or when there is no section, the International Secretariat.

Later chapters present information and advice about the practical campaigning work that members and groups can carry out to help achieve these mandate goals.

AI's FOCUS

The Mandate

What AI Does

Here are the specific goals that AI works to achieve -- the people for whom the organization campaigns, and the demands it makes of governments:

*** AI seeks the immediate and unconditional release of people detained or otherwise physically restricted anywhere for their beliefs or for their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language -- provided they have not used or advocated violence. These people are "prisoners of conscience".

AI does not demand the release of political prisoners who may have used violence, nor the release of people held for "ordinary" or "common" crimes that do not have a political aspect.

*** AI advocates fair trials within a reasonable time for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial.

AI insists on a fair and prompt trial for every person in custody whose detention has a political element. Such cases include those of people who may be prisoners of conscience -- and fair trial work is a principal way in which this can be established. AI works for fair trial in political cases even when the person may have used violence.

If it has been established that the person is a prisoner of conscience (that is, is imprisoned for his or her beliefs or identity), AI's focus will not be to demand a fair trial, but rather to insist on unconditional release.

If, on the other hand, the person is accused of an ordinary crime, this falls outside AI's mandate -- unless the accusation of having committed an "ordinary" crime is seen as a pretext. Fair trial standards, however, are highlighted in AI's campaigning against torture and the death penalty without restriction to political cases.

*** AI opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners without reservation.

AI's opposition to these abuses is unconditional. It does not depend on whether the victim is a prisoner of conscience, a political prisoner who may have used violence, or an ordinary criminal.

*** AI opposes all extrajudicial executions and "disappearances"

Just as AI opposes the "judicial" death penalty, it opposes executions in all their forms.

It opposes extrajudicial executions -- deliberate and unlawful killings by governments which result from a policy at any level of government to eliminate or permit the elimination of specific individuals or groups.

It opposes "disappearance" -- the taking of a person into custody by or with the approval of the authorities who then deny that the victim is held. "Disappeared" people are often at risk of torture or extrajudicial execution.

Again, AI's opposition is unconditional. It does not depend on whether the victim is a prisoner of conscience, a political prisoner who may have used violence, an ordinary criminal, or even on whether the victim is formally held in custody.

AI's opposes torture and deliberate and arbitrary killings by opposition groups -- political bodies that sometimes have many of the attributes of governments. AI condemns the torture or killing of prisoners by such groups, as well as other deliberate killings by them that are similar to extrajudicial executions carried out by government agents. AI also opposes the taking or holding of hostages by opposition groups.

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AI's mandate is complex and far-reaching. A comprehensive statement cannot easily be compressed into a few lines. This sentence covers the main areas of the AI mandate:

AI is the worldwide movement that works for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners, an end to torture, and an end to executions in all their forms.

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The People for Whom AI Works

During most of its history, AI's campaigning has been focused on prisoners. Its mandate has often been described as "prisoner-oriented".

The people for whom AI works are men, women, and children forcibly confined by governments: in prisons or jails, in interrogation centres, in reformatories, in internment camps, labour camps, or re-education camps, in police stations or army barracks -- or in

penalty.

AI will work also with other human rights defenders whose mandate may be far wider in scope than AI's own, and will campaign for their rights to freedom of association and expression.

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Prisoners of Conscience

AI demands that all prisoners of conscience be set free immediately and unconditionally.

Under the headline "The Forgotten Prisoners", a 1961 newspaper article by British lawyer Peter Benenson asked readers to join a struggle for human rights.

It invited them to take part in an "appeal for amnesty" on behalf of people jailed for their opinions. The article pointed out that this imprisonment was a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It called the detainees "prisoners of conscience".

Thousands volunteered to help, and soon AI was established and growing.

Since 1961, the movement has taken up the fight against a somewhat wider range of human rights abuses. The plight of prisoners of conscience, however, is still a major concern of the organization. As long as governments continue to imprison people because of their beliefs or their identity, AI will continue to "adopt" these prisoners and to demand their freedom.

The Face of the Prisoner

No one can know for certain how many prisoners of conscience are locked up in the jail cells of the world. They are held by governments in all regions, in countries with diverse political and social systems. What is certain is this: for each name that is known, for each case that becomes news, there are many more that are unknown.

A few prisoners of conscience are prominent individuals, active and well-known in public life. Many of these are artists, lawyers, politicians, or trade unionists. Because they often challenge the official view, such people are likely to bring themselves into conflict with the authorities.

Most prisoners of conscience, however, are ordinary women, men, even children. They come from all walks of life. They frequently are not political dissidents, and they generally are unknown. They are imprisoned simply for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

Some prisoners of conscience have acted in direct opposition to the entire system of government, while others have worked within the legal framework of a country's political system but been imprisoned nonetheless. People can become prisoners of conscience for all sorts of reasons ...

- because of their involvement in non-violent political activities, such as taking part in community development work

- for belonging to a minority group that is struggling for autonomy

- after insisting on observing religious practices of which the state does not approve

- because of their trade union activities such as taking part in strikes or demonstrations

- on the pretext that they committed a crime while in fact they have only criticized the authorities

- because they wrote newspaper articles that raised the alarm about human rights violations taking place within their own countries

- after they refused to perform military service on grounds of conscience

- when they have resisted using a country's official language

- simply because they happened to live in a certain village

- because a family member is an outspoken opponent of the government

AI's aim is to give attention to all the forgotten prisoners, to ensure that they remain a public concern, and to work to set them free.

AI's Demand

AI insists that all prisoners of conscience be set free at once and without conditions.

Under international law, governments have no right to hold these people.

AI does not accept that releases can be negotiated -- it does not make deals.

These detainees are held because of their beliefs or because of their identity, not for any crime they may have committed.

They should not be in jail at all, and they must be set free at once.

Who Decides

AI's interpretation of the definition of "prisoner of conscience" is detailed and specific. The decision whether a particular detainee falls into this category often demands careful analysis of the facts.

Researchers at the International Secretariat are responsible for making this decision. They rely upon information gathered from many sources, information that is painstakingly cross-checked for accuracy.

The researchers assess the information in light of the movement's definition of prisoner of conscience. In difficult cases, the researchers may call for the help of an international group of volunteer members known as the Mandate Committee (formerly the Borderline Committee).

To campaign effectively on behalf of prisoners of conscience, it is important for members to understand and to be able to explain the basic definition, especially the so-called "violence clause".

AI and Violence

AI will not demand the release of anyone imprisoned for using or for advocating violence.

A vital part of AI's mandate is the so-called "violence clause". It sets prisoners of conscience apart from the other categories of prisoners on whose behalf the movement works. Here is the rule:

If a prisoner is serving a sentence imposed, after a fair trial, for activities involving violence, AI will not ask the government to release the prisoner.

Violence means the use or threat of physical force against a person. Violence may also mean damage to objects.

This rule is crucial in demonstrating AI's impartiality.

Were AI to call for the release of violent opponents of governments, the organization might be accused of being politically biased -- even of supporting "terrorists".

It would be a hopeless task for AI to demand of any government that it release such prisoners without conditions. Were AI to make such appeals, it would risk damaging its credibility and harming its effectiveness overall.

AI embraces as members people of all political colours, from pacifists

to people who believe that in some circumstances it is acceptable to resort to arms in political conflicts. The violence clause is a "necessary limitation" that makes it possible for all these people to work together.

There are two other reasons for this rule.

** Were AI to support the release of violent prisoners, this demand would compromise AI's work on behalf of humane treatment generally. Clearly, AI would be applying a double standard to insist that police and prison authorities abstain from acts of brutality, while at the same time maintaining that other violent acts should go unpunished.

** It would introduce the practical problem of sorting violent political actions from violent criminal actions. Members would become deadlocked in political argument over what violent acts are justified and which prisoners are deserving of AI's support. Under the current rule, the political beliefs of members are irrelevant to their work with the organization.

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AI's stand is a practical, not a moral position.

AI, as a non-political organization, does not judge whether recourse to violence is justified or not. Nor does AI oppose the political use of violence in itself. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in its preamble, foresees situations in which people could "be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression".

AI neither supports nor condemns the resort to violence by political opposition groups in itself, just as AI neither supports nor condemns a government policy of using military force in fighting against armed opposition movements. (AI does support minimum humane standards that should be respected by governments and armed opposition groups alike.)

Nor does AI take a position on the question of the morality of war between states. AI is not a pacifist organization.

The broad issue of whether "insurgency" or "war" is morally justified has no bearing upon AI's central task, which is to bring relief to individual victims of injustice.

When an opposition group tortures or kills its captives, takes hostages, or commits deliberate and arbitrary killings within AI's scope for action, AI condemns these abuses. If AI feels that direct appeals to a such a group would be effective, AI may make them. AI can base its position on the minimum standards set out in humanitarian law (the "laws of war"), which can apply to governments and to opposition groups alike.

When a government commits similar acts, AI demands that the government keep the promises it may have made under international law to observe

and respect human rights. A context of violence never justifies taking prisoners of conscience, or torture, or executions.

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AI's violence clause is sometimes misunderstood on the following points:

*** It is sometimes said that "AI has no view on violence"

In fact, AI condemns all torture, ill-treatment, and executions, and it works generally for the humane treatment of prisoners. What AI takes no position on is the resort to arms in the context of political disputes.

*** It is sometimes said that "AI ignores the fate of prisoners convicted of violence"

In fact, AI will demand a fair and prompt trial for political prisoners who may have used or advocated violence. It will insist that all prisoners -- including people who may have been convicted of crimes such as assault or murder -- not be tortured or executed. If, however, AI were to demand the release of prisoners convicted of violence, the impact of its work on behalf of all prisoners would be damaged.

*** It is sometimes said that, "once convicted fairly of a violent act, a person can never be considered a prisoner of conscience"

In fact, AI might ask for release if, for example, the detainee committed violence in the past, but is now in jail for some other charge, or, if the person is kept in detention for political reasons after a sentence for a violent act has been completed, or in clear and unambiguous instances of individual, proportionate self-defence.

It may be said that the violence test applies to the detention rather than to the detainee. The question is not: "Has this prisoner ever used or advocated violence?" but rather: "In AI's view, can this period of imprisonment be linked with the use or advocacy of violence?"

*** It is sometimes said that "all members of groups that advocate or use violence are denied any chance of being considered prisoners of conscience"

In fact, some members of such groups may have distanced themselves from violent methods. AI assesses all such cases individually.

AI has found that members of opposition groups will accept the movement's position on violence when it is explained to them and will recognize that the rule is necessary so that AI can be effective.

AI always makes its own judgment whether a prisoner has used or advocated violence. Governments sometimes lay false charges as an excuse for holding people, and AI does not automatically accept what

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Civil Disobedience

People are said to take part in "civil disobedience" when they commit a non-violent but unlawful act (such as trespassing or obstructing roads) in order to make a political protest.

When people are imprisoned following these acts, AI deals with such cases in the same way it does all others. It will adopt these people as prisoners of conscience if it finds that they are imprisoned because of their beliefs or their identity, and they have not used or advocated violence.

If the punishment for the unlawful act does not exceed what is normal for the type of offence, AI will not adopt the person.

If, however, the punishment exceeds what is normal for the type of offence, AI may adopt the person as a prisoner of conscience on the grounds that the sentence is imposed not to punish the offence itself, but on account of the person's beliefs or identity.

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AI and Imprisoned Homosexuals

AI has traditionally worked on behalf of prisoners of conscience detained because of the exercise of their right to freedom of expression and opinion, including those imprisoned for advocating homosexual equality. It has worked also on behalf of those detained solely because of discriminatory treatment on account of their identity -- their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language.

Since 1991, AI has extended its work on behalf of people imprisoned by reason of their identity to work for the release of people who are detained solely because they are or are believed to be homosexual. These include people imprisoned for their private and personal conduct between freely consenting adults.

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Political Prisoners

AI demands that political prisoners receive a fair trial within a reasonable time, in accordance with the internationally-recognized right of all prisoners to a fair trial within a reasonable time.

AI uses the term "political prisoner" broadly. It does not use it, as some others do, to imply that all such prisoners have a special status or should be released. It uses the term only to define a category of prisoners for whom AI demands a fair and prompt trial.

In AI's usage, the term includes any prisoner whose case has a significant political element: whether the motivation of the prisoner's acts, the acts in themselves, or the motivation of the authorities.

"Political" is used by AI to refer to aspects of human relations related to "politics": the mechanisms of society and civil order; the principles, organization or conduct of government or public affairs; and the interaction of people within their communities and with their government on factors such as language, ethnic origin, sex or religion, status or influence (among others).

The category of political prisoners embraces the category of prisoners of conscience -- the only prisoners who AI demands should be immediately and unconditionally released -- as well as people who resort to criminal violence for a political motive.

In AI's use of the term, here are some examples of political prisoners:

- * a person accused or convicted of an ordinary crime carried out for political motives, such as murder or robbery carried out to support the objectives of an opposition group
- * a person accused or convicted of an ordinary crime committed in a political context, such as at a demonstration by a trade union or a peasants' organization
- * a member or suspected member of an armed opposition group who has been charged with treason or "subversion"

Governments often say they have no political prisoners, only prisoners held under the normal criminal law. AI however describes cases like the examples given above as "political" and uses the terms "political trial" and "political imprisonment" when referring to them. But by doing so AI does not oppose the imprisonment, except where it further maintains that the prisoner is a prisoner of conscience, or condemn the trial, except where it concludes that it was unfair.

It is also important to understand that:

*** By calling for a fair trial, AI does not condone the use of violence by political prisoners. Once again, AI takes no position on the resort to arms in political conflicts.

*** By using the term political prisoners, AI does not take a stand on these prisoners' political goals. AI does not support or oppose the views of the people for whom it campaigns.

*** By using the term, AI does not suggest that these people should

enjoy any special status or special conditions while imprisoned. For example, AI does not hold that they should be exempt from wearing prison clothing. AI maintains only that political prisoners, like all prisoners, must be treated humanely.

The basic criteria for fair trial are set out in international standards. These criteria include such norms as the right ...

- * to be presumed innocent until proved guilty
- * to be able to present a legal defence
- * to be present at your own trial
- * to not be compelled to testify against yourself or to confess guilt
- * to be tried before an independent and impartial tribunal

AI's work on behalf of fair trial on a case-by-case basis must take into account differences in judicial systems around the world, such as, for example, whether a jury system is used. It must also take into account the prisoner's best interest -- AI may decide not to press for a fair trial within a reasonable time if it appears, for example, that the outcome would be the imposition of a death sentence.

In many countries, political prisoners are convicted in trials that violate internationally agreed standards. These trials use secret hearings, prohibit defence lawyers or the chance to consult with them, refuse to allow defence witnesses, deny the right of cross-examination, and admit evidence taken under duress or torture.

In other countries, political prisoners may be held for years, sometimes decades, without any trial or judicial hearing at all. AI's fundamental position in all such cases is that prisoners should be afforded a fair trial within a reasonable time, or released.

AI works not only on behalf of the individual prisoners, but it calls on governments to end systematic procedures, such as administrative detention, when they allow for prolonged political detention without legal safeguards.

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Why does AI campaign for fair and prompt trials for political prisoners, but not for all prisoners?

While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls for fair trial for every accused person, AI's concerns are more limited.

If a person is imprisoned solely for criminal acts -- such as traffic offences, theft or murder -- and if there is no basis for believing that either the crime or the imprisonment was politically motivated, AI will not take action.

The movement cannot work effectively on behalf of every prisoner who may be a victim of a miscarriage of justice. AI does not have the resources or the expertise to do so -- there are literally millions of criminal cases in progress at any one time.

Through its practical focus on political cases, however, AI promotes fair trial standards that are applicable to all prisoners.

Furthermore, in the context of its work toward the observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, AI supports the right of everyone to a fair trial.

The organization will, of course, take action on behalf of any prisoner facing torture or the death penalty, and fair trial elements, among other methods, can be a part of this action.

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Torture and Ill-Treatment

AI condemns torture in all cases.

As defined by the United Nations, torture is the purposeful infliction of severe pain or suffering on a detainee by public officials or with their acquiescence.

Torture does not happen simply because individual torturers are sadistic, or because legal restraints happen to lapse in isolated incidents. Torture often is an integral part of a government's security strategy, a component of the state's machinery for suppressing dissent. Torture of common criminal suspects may also be a routine aspect of a government's justice system.

Torture is used to gain information, to obtain a confession, to punish, to intimidate, and to terrorize. Whatever its immediate purpose, torture degrades the victims and at the same time it dehumanizes the torturer.

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The purpose of torture is not only the extortion of confessions, of betrayal: the victim must disgrace himself, by his screams and his submissions, like a human animal. In the eyes of everybody and in his own eyes. He who yields under torture is not only to be made to talk, but is also to be marked as subhuman.

- Jean-Paul Sartre

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Torture happens every day. Despite the international agreements that forbid it and despite the denials from governments that use it, torture is common and systematic. It is reported in many countries, regardless

of political ideologies or economic systems.

The list of torture techniques used today includes not only archaic instruments like whips, clubs and thumbscrews, but also the modern technology of electricity, sophisticated methods of psychological assault, and drugs that can cause dread, hallucinations, muscle spasms, and paralysis. Victims are beaten, burned, raped, suffocated, and subjected to mock executions.

The victims of torture include members of all social classes, trade groups, ages, and professions. Criminal suspects as well as political detainees may be tortured. Women often face sexual degradation at the hands of their male torturers. In some countries, even children have been tortured or have been forced to watch the torture of their parents.

This part of AI's mandate is plain and direct: AI opposes the torture of all prisoners without exception.

When individuals are threatened with torture, AI acts urgently and on a massive global scale to try to rescue them.

To stop torture before it happens, the organization lobbies governments to implement international standards. It has launched its own 12-Point Program for the Prevention of Torture that calls for immediate, active measures on the part of governments.

AI also supports the medical and psychological rehabilitation of torture victims, although the movement does not become directly involved in carrying out this humanitarian work.

AI condemns other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The term "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" refers generally to any harsh treatment that could damage a prisoner's physical or mental health, or any punishment meant to cause suffering. All such treatments and punishments are clearly prohibited in international law.

AI uses the term to describe both acts and omissions that cause prisoners to suffer in violation of international standards. These include ...

- * deliberate measures to cause suffering, such as confinement in a dark punishment cell

- * painful measures in which suffering may not be the object, such as the use of manacles as a restraint

- * treatment that is a consequence of neglect, where the conditions of confinement and denial of basic needs cause prisoners acute misery

The Death Penalty

AI opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception.

The death penalty is the ultimate denial of human rights. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

The death penalty has no special power to reduce crime or political violence. It has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments.

The death penalty is discriminatory. It has often been used disproportionately against the poor, against minorities, and against members of racial, ethnic, and religious communities.

The death penalty is an instrument of political repression. It has been used by those in power to eliminate their political opponents. The death penalty is irreversible. Inevitably, it will claim innocent victims. As long as human justice remains fallible, the risk of executing the innocent can never be eliminated.

The death penalty is brutalizing to everyone involved. Execution is an act of violence, and violence tends to provoke violence.

The death penalty differs from other categories of human rights abuses, such as torture, in that it is usually not hidden or denied but is part of the law of the land. Although more and more governments are abolishing the death penalty, this form of punishment is still retained in the laws of over half of the countries of the world. In these countries, men and women -- and in some jurisdictions, even children -- can be put to death by the state.

Governments execute their citizens by various methods: hanging, shooting, electrocution, injection of poison, gas, stoning, or beheading.

The offences punishable by death range from violent and often brutal crimes such as murder, rape and armed robbery, to non-violent crimes such as black marketeering, bribe-taking, and prostitution.

The death penalty, however, is arbitrary. Whether an accused person is sentenced to death is often determined not only by the nature of the crime, but by the defendant's ethnic and social background, financial means, or political opinions.

No matter what reason a government gives for executing prisoners or what method of execution is used, the death penalty cannot be defined purely as a criminal justice issue. The death penalty is a human rights issue.

The idea that a government can justify the punishment of death

contradicts the very notion of human rights. The significance of human rights is precisely this: that some means may never be used to protect society because their use violates the values that make society worth protecting.

The death penalty is wrong in all cases.

Like AI's condemnation of torture, this part of AI's mandate is straightforward and absolute: AI opposes the death penalty totally and unconditionally, and it demands the worldwide abolition of this form of punishment.

AI takes action to prevent condemned prisoners from being executed, and it campaigns to persuade governments to abolish the death penalty in law.

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International Law and the Death Penalty

Major international human rights standards state broadly that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

When AI began opposing executions, there was no binding international instrument that explicitly called for an end to the death penalty. This meant that AI's campaign for abolition was a departure from its usual reliance on international law. While AI believed it was on solid moral grounds, it had no legal basis for this part of its mandate.

A step forward was taken in 1966 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 6 of the covenant established restrictions and safeguards on the death penalty "in countries which have not abolished it". In a general comment, the Human Rights Committee that was set up under the covenant found the terms of Article 6 to "strongly suggest ... that abolition is desirable."

In 1971 the General Assembly affirmed that in order fully to guarantee the right to life, "the main objective to be pursued is that of progressively restricting the number of offences for which capital punishment may be imposed, with a view to the desirability of abolishing this punishment in all countries". This resolution was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in 1977.

In 1984, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the "Safeguards Guaranteeing Protection of the Rights of Those Facing the Death Penalty". Endorsed by the General Assembly the same year, the "ECOSOC safeguards" list the most important restrictions and safeguards on the death penalty. Among other things, they forbid its application to certain categories of offenders -- including people less than 18 years old at the time of the commission of the crime. They provide that anyone sentenced to death should have the right to appeal to a higher court and to petition for pardon or commutation of the sentence.

pretence of legality.

The organization uses the term "extrajudicial executions" to describe deliberate and unlawful killings by state agents acting outside the framework of the judicial or legal system.

Extrajudicial executions usually occur within a government's own territory. Commonly, the victims are its own people -- those whose safety the government is sworn to protect.

Such killings are carried out by regular military or police forces, by special units created to function without normal supervision, or by civilian agents working with government forces or operating with government complicity. Such government forces, units, or agents are often called "death squads".

Sometimes, extrajudicial executions are carried out across international borders: the work of assassins whose victims are selected targets, usually government opponents, living abroad.

Because "death squads" sometimes carry out their killings without taking people into detention -- executing them on the spot -- this is an area of AI's mandate that concerns people who may not be prisoners.

The organization takes action against all extrajudicial executions. Such killings are characterized by evidence that they are the result of official policy, when, for example, it appears the government has singled out individuals or groups for death, or when it has chosen to turn a blind eye to excesses by the security forces. Another way to put it is to say that AI opposes murder by the state.

The term "extrajudicial executions" distinguishes such killings from the judicial death penalty -- a sentence imposed by a court after a prisoner has been convicted of a crime for which this penalty is provided in law. AI opposes the judicial death penalty in every instance.

The term also distinguishes such deliberate and unlawful killings from other categories of killings by state agents where specific individuals are not marked out, arbitrarily, for death. On these, AI takes no position. Some examples are:

- * deaths caused by the use of reasonable police force
- * deaths caused by accident or as a consequence of panic by security officials
- * killings carried out by renegade agents in violation of enforced official policy
- * killings in war that are the by-product of government attempts to achieve military objectives

In opposing the judicial death penalty, AI makes no distinction between political and non-political victims, and it makes no distinction here. AI will condemn, for example, the state killing of individuals regarded by governments as "undesirable", such as poor people or street children.

During recent decades, hundreds of thousands of people around the world have been the victims of such murders. Some governments are using "death squads" to eliminate their opponents by illegal execution rather than by arrest and imprisonment. AI has found that, as a consequence, there may be few prisoners of conscience in some of the countries where patterns of such killings are reported.

Those who give orders for an official policy of state killing will seldom admit that they have done so. Therefore, it is often difficult to establish that the murders are linked to the state or that they are intentional.

Governments often deny that the killings have taken place at all or that their agents were involved. They may blame the deaths on opposition groups. They may try to pass them off as the result of accidents or of armed encounters with government forces. They may say that the victims were killed while trying to escape from custody.

Under national and international law, governments are responsible for the lives of their citizens. They have the duty not to commit political killings or to condone them.

The responsibility of governments is not eased by considerations of national security. It is not lessened by the fact that opposition groups may commit similar abuses.

AI's response to extrajudicial executions is to take steps to try to prevent further such killings being committed in the future. The movement ...

- * publicizes the killings
- * calls for independent investigations
- * demands that those responsible be brought to justice

In cases where an individual is not killed but has received death threats, AI urgently demands that the government take immediate steps to ensure the person's protection.

"Disappearances"

AI condemns "disappearances", a form of state kidnapping.

The term "disappearance" is used when people are arrested or kidnapped -- and often, tortured or killed -- by government agents, but the authorities deny that these people are being detained.

The word is placed in inverted commas to indicate that AI does not accept the official explanation usually provided -- that the victims have indeed vanished (the more general use of the term). In AI's opinion, the authorities likely know precisely the whereabouts and the fate of the victims.

Like extrajudicial executions, "disappearances" are a tactic of repression that governments find to be swift and convenient. Rather than deal with their opponents through the elaborate process of arrest, trial, and long-term imprisonment, some governments may prefer simply to abduct them.

Similarly, while it is difficult to evade responsibility for political prisoners held in visible custody, governments can more readily deny accountability for "disappeared" people.

"Disappearances", like extrajudicial executions, often take place in the context of violent opposition to a government. The victims frequently are suspected members, supporters, or potential sympathizers of opposition groups.

AI considers "disappearances" a gross violation of fundamental human rights. The abuse serves to disguise other abuses. Not only are its victims obviously detained without charge or trial, but they often are at great risk of being tortured and of being killed while in the secret custody of state agents.

When AI receives a report of a "disappearance" it acts urgently to demand an investigation and to let the authorities know that they will be held responsible for the fate of the victim.

"Disappearances" are shrouded in mystery. Families, friends, lawyers and human rights activists who try to collect information or to obtain remedies are met with denials or intimidation -- or, sometimes, themselves "disappear".

A terrible effect of a "disappearance" is the pain and anxiety that the uncertainty inflicts upon the victim's family, who suffer the trauma of abandonment, loneliness, insecurity, and a permanent sense of fear.

In recent decades, this abuse has become so widespread that the English language word "disappeared" has come to mean not only the victim but also what the state did to the victim -- it "disappeared" the person.

Refugees

AI opposes the sending of individuals from one country to another where they are at risk of becoming victims of the human rights violations that are of concern to the movement.

In the 1990s, in different parts of the globe, there are millions of people seeking refuge outside their own countries. These people have fled their own countries for a variety of reasons. Among the most common are war, famine, ecological disaster or persecution.

Many are in flight from the threat of human rights violations on account of their opinions or beliefs, race or sex, or from the threat of torture, "disappearance", or execution.

The persecution they are fleeing is not confined to any region or to any political system. Refugees have crossed almost every territorial boundary in the world in search of safety.

Refugees are cut off from family and friends, their lives completely disrupted. They are often the victims of abuse and exploitation. Frequently, they live in camps where food and medical supplies are scarce, and where there is no way to earn a living.

AI does not work on behalf of all refugees, but only those who are at risk of being held as prisoners of conscience, of "disappearance", or of suffering torture or execution. International law prohibits the return of any person to a country where there is any such risk.

Some governments have rejected asylum-seekers' applications for refuge, suggesting that their fears of persecution are exaggerated. They have threatened to return these people to their home countries.

Just as AI does what it can to help actual victims of human rights abuses, it does what it can to help people in flight from the risk of suffering these abuses. AI can help such asylum-seekers in the following ways:

- AI can demonstrate that asylum-seekers' fears are justified by providing information on human rights abuses in the countries they have fled

- the organization can intercede with government officials on behalf of persons threatened with being returned to countries where they risk serious human rights violations

- to ensure that those at risk are identified and given protection, AI calls on governments to establish fair and adequate procedures for the determination of refugee claims, and it works to ensure that asylum-seekers have effective access to these procedures

- AI works to ensure that asylum-seekers are not detained in a way that contravenes international standards

It is important to understand that AI's work for refugees is limited by its mandate and its resources. It can not, for example, protect and care for people who live in the thousands of refugee camps around the world.

Its work focuses on asylum-seekers who are threatened with being forcibly returned to countries where they risk becoming prisoners of conscience, or being "disappeared", or tortured, or executed.

Relief

While AI is not an aid organization, in some instances it can provide limited funds to prisoners of conscience, former prisoners of conscience, victims of torture, refugees, and the dependants of these people including the dependants of "disappeared" persons and of victims of political killings.

The assistance is meant to help these people deal with the effects of the situation they suffer from. It is not intended to compensate them for the human rights violations they have suffered or for loss of income, nor to provide for their total needs.

Decisions about relief are often sensitive and are therefore made on a case-by-case basis. Relief can be provided by an AI group, or from relief funds held by a section or at the International Secretariat.

For reasons of security, relief activities call for a low public profile. Detailed guidelines are available from relief officers in sections or from the International Secretariat.

Military, Security, and Police Transfers

Just as AI tries to prevent governments from contributing to human rights violations elsewhere by appealing to them not to return refugees to dangerous situations, so it takes a stand against international transfers of equipment and expertise to governments that use them to detain prisoners of conscience, inflict torture, or carry out executions.

AI condemns, for example, the international sale of devices meant for use in torture or execution. It opposes the teaching of torture techniques by one country's security agents to those of another country. AI calls for an immediate halt to all such links.

More generally, AI supports the introduction of laws in all countries that would regulate the export of other equipment, such as weapons, on human rights grounds. In particular cases, AI might question or campaign against such exports when there are grounds to believe that they would be used to infringe human rights (AI groups may undertake such actions only in agreement with the governing body of their section and, in some cases, only with the approval of the International Secretariat).

This policy has a particular intention. It is to prevent governments with a bad record in this area receiving specific types of equipment or training that they may then use to further violate human rights. It is also to hold supplying governments accountable for measures that could contribute to gross human rights abuse.

This is not a policy in favour of general arms embargoes or economic boycotts. AI neither supports nor opposes sanctions -- whether economic, cultural, or diplomatic -- against governments guilty of human rights violations.

Abuses by Opposition Groups

AI condemns as a matter of principle the torture and execution of prisoners by anyone, including opposition groups. AI often refers to these groups as "political non-governmental entities".

Based on criteria much like those that apply to extrajudicial executions by governments, AI also condemns other deliberate and arbitrary killings by opposition groups.

AI opposes hostage taking by opposition groups.

In opposing these abuses, the movement makes its protest known through its own publications and the news media. The organization may take further actions when it believes they would be effective, taking into account the extent of the perpetrator's control over the population and its ability to exercise authority over its own forces.

In its work on human rights violations by governments, AI applies the norms of international human rights law. It uses the human rights machinery of the United Nations and other international bodies that was devised expressly to protect people from the violation of their rights by governments.

It is governments that are bound by international human rights law, and it is governments that have the duty to enforce these standards. AI continues to regard the practical application of human rights norms as concerning the individual's rights in relation to government authority.

In its work on abuses by opposition groups, however, AI is guided by the norms of the international standards that concern humane behaviour during armed conflict. This is humanitarian law (or, the "laws of war").

Humanitarian law sets out the standards by which all parties to an armed conflict -- governments and opposition groups alike -- must act. AI's own policy on abuses by opposition groups is guided by these standards, much as its work on the actions of government is guided by international human rights law.

A Dynamic Movement

AI's mandate has been developing continuously. The categories of people for whom the movement works and the demands it makes on their behalf have never been static, and they are unlikely to become so in the future.

AI responds to changes in the patterns of human rights abuses around the world by adapting its work.

In the 1990s, governments that want to silence their opponents are less inclined to lay formal charges, hold trials, and sentence prisoners of conscience to lengthy jail terms. They are more likely to use measures such as administrative detention without charge or trial, or "disappearance", or extrajudicial execution.

Just as people in power are finding new ways to abuse human rights, AI must find new ways to oppose them.

The AI Statute (reproduced in full in the Appendix) can be amended by a two-thirds vote of delegates attending the biennial meeting of the International Council, the movement's supreme governing body. This is the principal means whereby AI members can together set the organization's objectives.

The Statute is only a small part of the picture. The mandate is interpreted by non-statutory resolutions of the International Council. It is molded also by decisions of the International Executive Committee, the movement's elected board of directors.

The day-to-day decisions of the staff at the International Secretariat apply the mandate in practice. The staff are guided by the Mandate Committee, acting in its interpretative role.

As a separate and no less important role, the Mandate Committee also considers possible changes in the mandate and makes recommendations in this regard. In recent years the movement has periodically established a formal mandate review process; the Mandate Committee will now guide this process on a permanent basis.

AI's complex and evolving mandate signifies that the movement is vibrant and aware. It is quick to confront new abuses of human rights as they arise. It responds to new patterns of repression as they make themselves apparent.

AI's dynamic mandate demonstrates that the organization is actively involved in the real world, a practical force working effectively to help achieve justice and human dignity.

Chapter 4

CAMPAIGNING

How AI Works

People are jailed because of their beliefs or their identity. Political prisoners are held for years without trial. Prisoners are tortured or executed. Individuals are threatened by "death squads", or are murdered by state agents, or simply "disappear". Frightened women, men, and children flee these horrors and go into exile.

AI's task is to help these people. The movement tries to protect those who are in immediate danger. It takes steps to prevent such situations arising again. And it aims to promote long-term respect for human rights.

To accomplish these goals, AI has become a permanent campaigning movement. It carries out an ongoing array of actions designed to arouse global public opinion that will put pressure on people in power to respect human rights.

This chapter explains how AI works. It shows how the movement gathers, assesses, and distributes information so that AI delivers "one message". It demonstrates how AI's members and supporters use this information to mobilize the world, and how they raise their "many voices" to create global pressure.

This chapter is a broad description of AI's approach. Chapter 5 will present detailed advice, guidelines, and practical ideas for carrying out human rights campaigning in the local community.

CAMPAIGNING

How AI Works

Creating Pressure

Pressure is a persistent demand. It is a weekly appeal to the Minister of Justice.

Pressure is a growing demand. It is an appeal to the Minister of Justice from not just one person, but from ten people, then a hundred people, then a thousand people.

Pressure is a strong demand. It is backed by evidence of abuses and calls for specific measures the Minister of Justice should take to stop them.

Pressure is a public demand. It is a report of a state abuse that appears in newspapers, radio, and television.

Pressure is an impartial demand. It is ensured by the simple donation of money to AI that gives independence, credibility and strength to the organization's letters and statements and publicity.

Pressure is letting people in power know that they are being watched. It is bringing human rights violations out from the darkness of official secrecy and into the light.

The Human Rights Movement

The real movement for human rights is made up of thousands of organizations and institutions. These may be trade unions, newspapers, community organizations -- and governments. In the course of their "normal" activities, they work to put pressure on governments that violate human rights.

The movement for human rights is also made up of countless individuals. Each person, in his or her own way, helps to shift the balance in favour of human rights.

Some of these people create pressure by force of numbers: they sign petitions, join demonstrations, or donate money to a human rights organization. Others -- famous artists, business managers, religious leaders, government ministers, heads of state -- make pressure by using their positions of influence or power.

These institutions and people are alerted to the facts about human rights violations and are motivated to do something about them by many different human rights organizations. One of those organizations is AI.

AI Activists: Working Together

AI is a broad-based movement of activists. It is more than a million dedicated people who share a vision of human rights, who are determined to put pressure on governments to stop abuses wherever they happen, and who are ready to work to help achieve this.

These activists represent a global presence -- a campaigning potential -- that is in position to act swiftly and effectively as soon as AI receives a report about the abuses of human rights that concern it.

These individuals do not necessarily bring special skills or expertise to the movement. They do bring some of their time and personal resources, but particularly, they bring their commitment, energy and creativity.

These people fight for human rights in different ways. Registered members of the organization subscribe to its publications, join its groups, and take part in its campaigning. Donors sustain this work with their financial contributions. Staff persons provide professional support. Many people who are neither members nor donors nor staff assist the movement by a range of means, from simply signing an AI petition at an information table to making a parliamentary speech about human rights.

AI activists come from all walks of life and they can be found in almost every country. Many contribute to AI's campaigning by working alone, as individuals. They write letters of appeal, particularly in urgent cases where speedy response is crucial. They donate money and materials to AI. They carry AI's human rights message to their own political representatives and to the local news media.

A large part of AI's pressure, however, is created by members who join with fellow activists in groups or in other networks.

Networks

AI is an international system of action networks.

The movement can respond rapidly and effectively to reports of human rights abuses because its activists -- regardless of where they may live -- are receiving information promptly from the movement's research centre.

AI is a global web of interwoven and overlapping channels of communication. Its members, subscribers, supporters, staff, local groups, and sections are linked with the International Secretariat. They keep in touch by using the postal service, telephone, telex, FAX, electronic mail, and by visits.

Every AI activist is a strand in this worldwide web. Each person plays

a vital role in receiving and sending its life-saving information.

The system of networks makes it possible for AI to distribute information readily and to bring global pressure swiftly to bear on offending governments. The system makes it easy for the organization to monitor this information and to ensure that it remains accurate and credible, and that the pressure it creates is effective.

These networks differ in complexity, depending upon the stage of the organization's development in different parts of the world. It is impossible to draw a single picture that shows how all AI's networks fit together. This diagram gives a general sense of how action information is channelled through the movement.

AI Groups: Campaigning in Local Communities

The basic unit of AI's local structure and campaigning is the group.

The AI group is a number of committed activists who join together regularly to carry out AI's human rights campaigning -- to appeal on behalf of the victims of human rights violations, to encourage others in the community also to send appeals, and to raise money and long-term support that will strengthen AI's work.

AI members have formed thousands of groups around the world. They vary widely in size, resources, style and focus.

AI groups can number from five to more than 100 people. The active core of any group may not be static. It can change as its members come and go, or raise and lower their level of involvement.

Some groups can draw upon the wealth of prosperous communities. Others may count among their members people with many specialized skills. Yet others possess only a few resources or may have limited access to AI materials in their own language.

Typically, groups meet once a month, but many convene more or less frequently than that. The format of some meetings is casual, while other groups choose to observe formal rules of procedure.

Some groups -- while ensuring overall balance in their work -- concentrate on specific aspects of AI's concerns. Others decide to take up a broad range of issues. The most successful groups keep adjusting their activities to take advantage of changing resources and levels of membership involvement.

AI groups hold their meetings indoors or outdoors, at private homes, schools, religious institutions, business offices, factories, restaurants and places of entertainment, community centres, sports facilities, or public parks.

Groups take a variety of forms that emerge naturally out of their

"community", whatever that may be. Here are examples of the AI groups that have been campaigning dynamically and effectively ...

- * twenty-five men, women and children from all walks of life, with a variety of skills and interests, who happen to live in the same town, village, or neighbourhood and share a commitment to AI's goals

- * a circle of five or six friends who focus on letter-writing

- * a gathering of dozens of people who break into sub-groups, each team taking responsibility for a particular aspect of AI's work

- * a core of members of a faith community whose main goal is to try to involve their co-religionists in AI's campaigning

- * a student group that works with teachers to educate their classmates and colleagues about international human rights

- * medical or legal experts who take part in special actions drawing upon their professional training and their contacts

- * local members of a trade union who concentrate on building human rights awareness in the workplace and on mobilizing the many contacts and resources of their union

- * an artists' collective that creates fund-raising projects or holds dramatic publicity events

- * a committee of members of a national parliament who set aside their political differences in order to make appeals to counterparts in target countries.

AI encourages its activists to form groups because people who work together usually can create more pressure than can the same people acting alone. They stimulate each other's creativity, boost each other's confidence, and undertake a wider range of projects.

Depending on their resources, groups take up a range of campaigning activities. They make publicity in the community news media, lobby local politicians, reach out to involve professionals, send letters and other direct appeals, hold demonstrations, and organize fund-raising drives.

By extending AI's campaigning network into the community, groups multiply the pressure they can create.

For example, a group of ten activists receives from the International Secretariat (perhaps via a section office) a request to send appeals to a target government: AI is calling for an investigation into the "disappearance" of a lawyer. On its own, the group easily writes ten letters of concern. But that same group then generates hundreds -- if not thousands -- of additional messages by extending its campaigning network. Here is how it might do so:

The group asks a politician to raise the alarm about the missing lawyer in a speech to the regional bar association. The group encourages the local newspaper to report the speech and also to announce a street march dramatizing the "disappearance". During the event, the group asks for donations to cover the cost of urgent telegrams to the target government. At every stage, people are asked to send appeals.

The group integrates its campaigning activities. It looks for opportunities to combine contacts, approaches, and techniques, and to maximize the impact of its efforts.

Not only are many additional appeals sent to the target government, but the local community is made aware -- about "disappearances", about human rights in general, and about AI's mandate and work.

The group responds to the immediate call for action, and at the same time it builds long-term, broad-based support for its humanitarian work.

AI Sections: Campaigning Within a Country

A section is a national organizational structure, usually supported by an office, that coordinates and develops the campaigning of AI groups and members within a country.

Sections are key contact points in AI's system of linked networks. Sections help the International Secretariat to communicate with local groups and members around the world.

By the early 1990s, AI sections had been formed in almost 50 countries. Just as groups do, these sections vary in size, circumstances, structure, and resources:

- * some sections have registered tens of thousands of members, while others consist of a small number of groups
- * some are growing rapidly in members and resources, while others grow at a slower pace
- * some function with subdivisions that work within the nation's borders on a regional basis
- * some operate in countries where all members can easily gather together, while others are based in countries where the distances are so great or the travel conditions are so demanding that visits and meetings are difficult to organize
- * some have established large central offices staffed by paid professionals, while others maintain small offices with the aid of volunteer activists

* some collect large revenues from centrally coordinated fund-raising drives, while others rely mainly on the funds raised by their own groups

* some have installed electronic systems of telecommunication -- telephone, telex, FAX, electronic mail -- while others rely on a single manual typewriter and the postal system

* some sections find it relatively easy to approach the home government and the community, while others work in an atmosphere of indifference, mistrust, or hostility

All sections receive a Weekly Mailing of general information from the International Secretariat. This package contains requests for action, reports and other background documents, country and theme campaign materials, and papers concerning internal administrative matters.

In addition to this general mailing, each section is routinely updated, by mail, with information on the specific Action File cases or tasks that have been allocated to it and to its local groups.

As well, sections often receive from the International Secretariat urgent telephone calls, telexes, or FAX messages asking it to organize immediate appeals on an emergency concern.

Each section, in consultation with the International Secretariat, selects from among the array of campaigning possibilities those where it feels it has the resources to make the strongest impact. Often, the section adapts the International Secretariat's information in order to meet the special needs of its own groups and members.

A section may translate reports into local languages. It may re-format requests for appeals to make them accessible to a special audience, such as young people. It may edit and illustrate selected news releases for publication in its newsletter.

Once it has chosen its campaigning tasks and prepared the material, each section sends the information to the network of groups and activists that, in its judgment, will create the most effective pressure.

Sections assign to specific groups particular long-term tasks for which these groups are uniquely equipped -- such as pressing for the release of a prisoner of conscience. They also enlist temporary networks of groups and members to campaign on a cluster of issues in one target country.

As sections become more experienced and have more resources, they often appoint "country coordinators" (or country coordination groups, known as "co-groups"). These coordinators are important contacts for community groups. They specialize in human rights questions in particular target countries or regions, and advise groups and the

section office on any campaigning that is aimed at those parts of the world.

Because country coordinators are in close touch with groups, section offices, and the International Secretariat's Research Department, they are key links in AI's system of networks.

In addition to managing current actions, sections work to improve the resources available for long-term campaigning.

They create pamphlets, videos and other publicity resources designed to attract new members. They establish education programs to train these members in campaigning techniques. They raise money to pay for communications equipment, such as typewriters, photocopiers, and computer systems.

Sections are also responsible for all AI campaigning at the national level. Section-level officials handle contacts with national news media, with senior authorities in the home government, and with the central offices of national organizations such as trade unions, religious communities, and professional associations. Sections also coordinate all national public events and fund-raising drives.

International Secretariat: Campaigning Worldwide

The International Secretariat is the movement's research and campaigning headquarters.

This London office sets the broad campaigning framework for AI's global networks of sections, local groups, and individual activists. It gathers information about human rights abuses, checks the facts, chooses the most effective forms of campaigning, and distributes this material to the membership for action.

It sends the information to section offices, or where there is not yet a section, direct to groups, or where there is not yet a group, direct to individual "international members".

Within the International Secretariat are several departments that guide membership campaigning:

The Research Department collects, verifies and analyzes information. Its researchers and legal officers monitor human rights law, prepare the background information on which AI's initiatives are based, and plan and take part in missions. Through close contact with country coordinators in sections and with the Campaigning Unit, researchers advise the membership about campaigning strategies in specific target countries.

The Campaigning and Membership Department comprises two divisions, the Campaigning Unit and the Membership Unit.

of abuse such as torture or political killings by governments. It distributes on subscription a monthly newsletter. Annually it produces the widely-read and influential Amnesty International Report, a country-by-country survey of the movement's concerns during the previous year. And, it creates an array of leaflets, posters, films, tapes and slides.

Sections distribute the press and publicity information issued by the International Secretariat to the national-level media in their own countries. They market the reports and other materials nationally, often with help from local groups. Many sections translate or adapt particular items, such as the Amnesty International Newsletter, for use in their domestic publications.

AI groups also make effective publicity in their own communities, often by showing that events in faraway places have a local angle -- that human rights are everybody's business. Sometimes, a vigorous community effort by an AI group turns into a national protest that makes a distinct impression on a target government.

Groups send news releases and feature articles to local newspapers, write letters to the editor, give interviews on radio and television, stage dramatic public events, and recruit celebrities and prominent politicians.

Frequently, they ask readers, listeners and viewers to send direct appeals to target governments or to donate money to AI. Groups also seek out specialized media that may have a unique impact, such as professional journals, trade union newspapers, and youth radio.

Groups and individual members create long-term publicity for AI by distributing its reports, leaflets, photo exhibitions and other audio-visual materials to book stores, libraries, and schools.

Direct Appeals

AI applies direct pressure on the authorities by sending polite but firm messages of concern.

Most of the time, these appeals take the form of letters. AI members have used this straightforward approach from the beginning. In 1961, a temporary letter-writing campaign quickly grew to become a mass human rights movement.

A typical AI letter is brief, courteous, and factual. It points out that AI is a non-partisan organization. It cites relevant human rights law. It raises AI's specific demand. And it asks for a reply.

Letters are directed to an array of officials, including diplomatic representatives posted in the letter-writer's own country, and to prison authorities.

governments.

Missions are organized by the International Secretariat with the permission of AI's International Executive Committee -- and with the permission of the country's government. Section officials and group members never take part in AI missions to their own country, because such involvement would violate the work-on-own-country-rule. Frequently, missions are designed to gather information or to observe trials, but often a delegation will be able to meet with the authorities and to present the organization's concerns.

Meetings are a rare forum for first-hand dialogue and frank exchange with government authorities. They also provide AI with direct, official reactions to its protests, responses which often help in planning the movement's follow-up approaches.

Home Government Approaches

AI sections, groups and members mobilize the support of their own political leaders.

Politicians and senior government officials can bring their special influence to bear both on target governments abroad, and -- in the case of issues that do not violate AI's work-on-own-country rules -- also on the home government of which they are members.

In carefully coordinated approaches, sections and local groups ask domestic political representatives to take a stand for human rights
...

- * by sending to target governments direct appeals on behalf of a local group's long-term concern, such as the case of a political prisoner held without trial

- * by raising with foreign counterparts questions about patterns of human rights violations, such as systematic torture

- * by urging the home government not to forcibly return people to countries where they risk imprisonment as prisoners of conscience, torture, "disappearance", or execution

- * by encouraging the home government to sign international human rights treaties

- * by supporting domestic legislation in line with AI's mandate, such as laws concerning the death penalty, refugees, and transfers of security equipment or expertise

- * by taking advantage of the high public profile they enjoy to build human rights awareness into all their official activities

* by lending their presence and support to AI's public events

AI's working principles do not allow senior political figures to take leading positions in the movement. Sometimes, however, a number of political officials will set aside their partisan differences and will form multi-party AI groups. These groups, like all AI groups, meet regularly and pursue a balanced program of active campaigning.

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The United Nations and International Organizations

An important part of AI's lobbying for human rights is its work at the United Nations and at other intergovernmental organizations.

AI encourages such organizations to develop international human rights standards and to strengthen the machinery for ensuring that these standards are respected by governments. Whenever it is appropriate, AI also makes available to these organizations its information on different countries and cases.

The International Secretariat organizes formal representations to and relations with the United Nations, particularly its human rights bodies, as well as to regional intergovernmental organizations including the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, the Organization of African Unity, among others.

Sections take part in this international lobbying process by making AI's concerns known to their country's representatives to these bodies.

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Outreach

AI magnifies the pressure it creates by taking advantage of its links with the existing networks of other institutions.

The movement reaches beyond its own membership and invites influential sectors in the community to cooperate with it in doing human rights work. AI makes approaches to ...

* professionals such as doctors, nurses and other medical workers, scientists, business people, legal specialists, and teachers

* students and young people, artists, writers and journalists, and members of military and police forces

* members of religious communities, trade unions in all occupations, and political parties across the full spectrum

* non-governmental organizations such as agencies concerned with the welfare of children and women, indigenous peoples' groups, aid and development charities, environmental lobbyists, and other human rights bodies

Outreach has been called "target sector work" because AI "targets" specific social sectors and encourages their members to take up the cause of human rights. Not only does outreach enhance campaigning in the short term, but it diversifies AI's membership, and it builds a wider base of human rights awareness in the community.

Outreach strengthens campaigning in many ways. It draws upon the commitment and energy of supporters who have expressed a special interest, stemming perhaps from a link with a victim such as a shared occupation. It engages activists who can contribute a professional expertise, such as legal skills. It involves people with access to influential channels or to resources such as a mass membership that can send appeals or help with fund-raising.

An AI group seeking to reach out to its community might invite ...

* an organization that works for women's rights to publicize in its newsletter the cases of women held as prisoners of conscience

* legal professionals and trade unionists to send urgent appeals on behalf of human rights lawyers and labour leaders who have "disappeared"

* lawyers to draft well-informed arguments appealing for a fair trial for a political dissident

* medical personnel to protest against torture and ill-treatment of detainees

* children to raise their voices condemning the imposition of the death penalty on young people

* trade union federations to encourage their members and affiliates to make donations to AI

* religious leaders to invite their congregations to attend a solemn vigil on Human Rights Day

* members of political parties to raise human rights concerns with fellow party members abroad during international conferences

* influential people in different sectors -- religious, legal, medical -- to lobby their own government on behalf of AI's concerns

The international levels of AI frequently approach the international levels of trade union federations, religious communities, and medical and legal associations.

As well, the International Secretariat fosters outreach by sections and groups by distributing actions designed to involve specific sectors, such as legal and medical workers. Whenever possible, it highlights the background of the person whose case is described, such as "trade unionist" or "student", and also the nature of the appeal that is requested, such as "legal concern" or "health concern".

Many sections have appointed national coordinators for areas of campaigning outreach. These people make AI's approaches to the senior levels of the institutions for which they are responsible, and at the same time coordinate parallel approaches by local AI activists to the community levels of the same institutions. For example, a labour coordinator who has enlisted a union president to endorse an AI petition may also suggest that AI groups approach the union's local branches with the same appeal.

Some sections have formed specialist groups of medical and legal workers, journalists, and so forth. Like local or community groups, they meet regularly to plan and carry out human rights campaigning that capitalizes on their skills, contacts and capacities. These groups can also support the campaigning outreach of local groups.

Every community group includes individual members who can draw on their own experience to guide the group's outreach. All AI members are also part of other groups, networks, communities, or organizations that can be mobilized. Any AI member can approach other people and interest them in working for human rights.

In some circumstances, AI may ask domestic military, police, and other security officers to urge their counterparts abroad to respect the rights of detainees. It may invite business people to take advantage of their international contacts to make appeals for human rights.

Because military and company approaches carry special risks for AI's work, special care is taken in coordinating them. Consultation with the section or with the International Secretariat may often be appropriate.

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Human rights education: human rights awareness

The immediate goal of outreach is to generate more and stronger appeals that will enhance the impact of an effort on behalf of a current concern.

The long-term goal of outreach is to raise the general level of community awareness about human rights -- to inform every person about the rights that each person possesses.

AI works with trade unions, religious organizations, and with other human rights bodies to publicize the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It encourages home governments to establish human rights training programs for officials and security personnel, and sometimes

takes part in these programs.

In particular, AI aims to create a new "human rights generation". It works with teachers to introduce human rights education programs into the curriculum of schools, colleges, universities, and adult training centres, and in some sections it has fostered the growth of networks of youth and student groups.

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Symbolic Events

AI stages dramatic events that capture public notice and help to get across the movement's message.

To gain public attention, AI members use an array of theatrical means. They hold quiet vigils and noisy demonstrations, poetry readings and rock concerts, fasts and elaborate dinners, plain assemblies and torchlight processions, street theatre and film festivals, poster displays and fine art exhibitions, moments of silence and extended readings of the names of victims.

The emotional impact of public drama gives strength and encouragement to the activists who take part. At the same time, these events often support other campaigning techniques.

For example, people marching with AI banners enhance direct pressure when they escort a delegation to an embassy visit. They create publicity when they remember to invite the press. They mobilize non-members to take part when they have posted announcements. Their march comes to the notice of the home government when it embarks from the parliament. They raise money for AI when they ask for a small donation from every person involved.

Symbolic events are sponsored by every level of the movement. They can range from the series of huge rock concerts that were held around the world as part of the 1988 Human Rights Now! campaign to the quiet display of an AI badge by an individual supporter.

Fund-Raising

AI activists make it possible to put pressure on target governments by raising money to support the movement's work. Fund-raising is a key campaigning technique.

AI neither seeks nor accepts money from governments. The hundreds of thousands of donations that sustain the organization's work come from the pockets of its members and the public. This money helps make pressure in two ways.

--> Each donation adds to the number of appeals AI can send by covering the practical expenses of the organization.

To run the International Secretariat's research, campaigning and publications programs costs £1.50 each second, £90.00 each minute -- or over £9 million a year. This figure does not include the expense of operating AI's sections or its thousands of local groups. It does not include the cost of the thousands of letters and telegrams sent every month by individual members and supporters around the world.

--> Each donation adds to the impact that every one of these appeals will make because it helps to safeguard the independence of the movement and to demonstrate the credibility of its message.

Appeals from AI carry weight because the organization is seen to be independent, impartial, and self-financing. AI's reliance on broad-based public support keeps the movement free from interference from governments, funding agencies, and pressure groups.

Fund-raising is a vital part of the work of everyone in the movement.

A donation not only helps pay the costs of AI's campaigning -- the donation is itself a crucial part of that campaigning.

AI members often pay subscription fees to their group or section, or to the International Secretariat. These membership charges vary throughout the movement. Some members also make regular monthly or yearly donations to support the work.

In addition, members usually pay personally the cost of the many letters, telegrams and, in some instances, parcels that they send on behalf of prisoners throughout the year.

Groups are supported both by the fees their members may pay and by fund-raising activities the groups undertake. Often, groups combine these projects with other campaigning techniques, by ...

- * sponsoring a sale of used items where petitions are displayed for signing

- * placing in newspapers or on radio or television public service announcements that ask for donations and at the same time deliver a brief message about human rights

- * collecting money on street corners in exchange for AI badges the groups have designed and printed

- * organizing a benefit concert during which an AI supporter gives a talk about freedom of expression

- * asking a religious community to hold a service in memory of victims of "death squads" and to donate the collection to AI in support of its continued campaigning against political killings

* holding a "celebrity auction" where personal articles donated by well-known musicians, actors, or politicians are sold to the highest bidders

* approaching a trade union for a donation of a service, such as the use of its printing facilities

Many sections are sustained by the fund-raising of their groups, which pledge regular contributions to the national office.

Some sections have broadened the base of their financial support by starting direct mail programs in which thousands of individuals are informed of AI's work and asked to make a donation.

Schemes for selling AI merchandise -- clothing, posters, badges, stickers, postcards, key-rings, umbrellas -- have been launched successfully by several sections.

Sections hold major publicity and entertainment events, such as popular music concerts, from which the proceeds go to AI. Some sections have sponsored large fund-raising projects for the benefit of the entire movement, for example, the Norwegian Operation Give-A-Day Project supporting human rights education worldwide.

AI's international bodies and activities rely on income pledged by sections. There is no central fund-raising program.

The International Secretariat helps sections with their fund-raising efforts by making suggestions about publicity and by supplying facts and figures about AI activities. The movement has formed a Fund-Raising Working Group that distributes a newsletter drawing on the practical experiences of sections.

AI Alerted

Research

AI collects its information from many sources.

The Research Department at the International Secretariat receives reports of human rights violations from prisoners and their families (often sent at great personal risk), lawyers, other humanitarian organizations, religious bodies, community workers, refugees, journalists, and diplomats.

The researchers watch events and maintain a range of contacts in the countries for which they are responsible. They scan newspapers, journals, and government bulletins, and monitor television and radio broadcasts. They gather information by way of telephone calls, letters, FAX messages, telegrams, and visitors.

From time to time -- openly, and with the permission of the authorities -- the movement sends fact-finding missions to assess situations on the spot. The delegations might interview prisoners, their relatives and lawyers, and witnesses, or observe trials, or meet with government officials.

AI has no paid agents, no "spies", and no links with intelligence agencies.

When the researchers receive a report of a human rights violation that falls within AI's mandate, their first step is to check the credibility of the report -- AI does not campaign on the basis of hearsay, rumour, or biased or slanted stories.

Before AI takes any action on a piece of information, the information is carefully checked and cross-checked among different sources, and the reliability of the sources is examined.

The researchers build up profiles of known and possible victims of human rights violations -- prisoners of conscience, other political prisoners, prisoners subjected to torture, refugees, individuals facing the death penalty, people illegally executed, or "disappeared", or living under threat of a "death squad".

Before any statement is issued, its text is vetted and approved at different levels within the International Secretariat, to make sure that the statement is accurate, that it falls within AI's mandate, and that it is politically impartial.

When AI is compelled to deal with allegations rather than established fact, it makes this plain, and often calls for an investigation of the allegations. If AI makes a mistake, it issues a correction immediately.

The movement's research is recognized as highly reliable, and is widely consulted by scholars, journalists, governments, and organizations seeking information on violations of human rights.

The instructions for the researchers are: get the facts, double-check for accuracy before taking action, when verification is not possible say "alleged", where exactness is lacking lean toward understatement, if ever an error is made correct it at once.

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How does AI obtain information about "closed" countries?

Refugees, state radio, and the "closed" country's diplomatic representatives abroad are among the few sources of information about states that isolate themselves from the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, such sources often provide information that is too unreliable, dated, or incomplete to meet AI's rigorous standards of verification.

The fact that certain countries are not mentioned in AI's reports does not mean that AI has concluded there have been no human rights violations there. It may mean only that its researchers lack sufficient reliable, current, and detailed information to make an accurate judgment about these countries' human rights performance.

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Setting goals, Choosing methods

Once the facts have been established, AI takes action.

Armed with information about human rights violations that fall within AI's mandate, the International Secretariat asks the movement's worldwide networks of sections, groups, members, and supporters to put pressure on governments to stop these abuses.

To maximize the impact of this pressure, the International Secretariat chooses carefully ...

- * the government authorities, influential personalities, organizations and news media that need to be targeted in the country where the human rights violations are taking place
- * the countries from which pressure on the target country is likely to have the most impact
- * the AI networks that will make the most effective pressure
- * the channels it uses to transmit information to these networks
- * the campaigning activities it asks them to carry out

These choices are based on the International Secretariat's judgments of many factors, including the urgency of the situation, those people in the target country who have power and influence, those people abroad who may have influence on the target country, the most effective timing, and AI's available resources.

The movement has developed a rich and flexible array of forms of action. Unlike techniques, which are means of bringing public pressure to bear on governments, forms of action are ways of organizing this work within the internal networks of AI.

Sudden danger: emergency response

When AI confirms that an individual is in grave peril, it acts immediately.

As soon as it learns that a person is suffering or threatened with torture, or has "disappeared", or is being menaced by a "death squad", or has been sentenced to death, or needs urgent medical treatment, or faces return to a country where persecution is likely, AI mobilizes its global resources at once.

In cases where the movement has only hours to act, it cannot possibly organize mass distribution of information or mass appeals. There is time only for immediate protests from AI's centre. The Secretary General will make pressing appeals direct to a target government.

At the same time, the International Secretariat may urgently mobilize sections. Using rapid means of communication, it asks sections to send protests instantly to the target government and to its embassies. Sometimes it may ask sections to enlist the influential voices of national politicians or other high-profile figures.

If there is time to do so, AI can organize protests from large numbers of members and supporters. It has developed a network of volunteers -- perhaps as many as 50,000 in 60 countries -- who are ready to send Urgent Action appeals in emergency cases.

Urgent Actions are telexed and mailed from the International Secretariat to section coordinators who forward the information speedily to the groups or individuals in the network. The participants are asked to send, as soon as possible, express or airmail letters, telexes, FAX messages, or telegrams.

Within forty-eight hours of issue, each Urgent Action can generate scores of appeals. Within six weeks, it can produce several thousand protests from people throughout the world.

AI also takes up the cause of those asylum-seekers who are in danger of forcible return to countries where they risk becoming prisoners of conscience, or "disappearing", or suffering torture or execution.

Sections, often in consultation with the International Secretariat, work to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to fair refugee-determination procedures and that if held in detention they are treated in accordance with international standards. Sections also provide home government officials with information about the human rights situation in the countries the refugees have fled.

Patterns of abuse: strategic action

Even though AI holds the position that all abuses of human rights should stop at once, the movement does not have sufficient resources to maintain a continuous level of intense campaigning on every issue that falls within its mandate.

As well, different human rights concerns in different countries require different approaches to campaigning.

If AI is to campaign effectively for such a range of long-term goals as freedom for prisoners of conscience, an end to the death penalty in law, the ratification of human rights standards, and long-term public awareness about human rights, it must plan with care the allocation of its limited means.

The organization takes two broad strategies: it uses mass resources for a limited time, and specialized resources for an extended time.

Mass Resources, Limited Time

AI activates large parts of the membership for short-term work ...

- * to try to halt new or growing patterns of human rights violations, or to confront a situation of abuses so serious that only mass protests can hope to make any impact

- * to take advantage of opportune periods in the calendar, such as the run-up to a national election, or International Labour Day (1 May), International Women's Day (8 March), Human Rights Day (10 December), or the anniversary of AI itself (28 May)

- * to raise funds for AI and human rights awareness generally

Worldwide Appeals

On a regular basis the movement centres its attention on particular individual cases that are highlighted for mass appeals.

The Worldwide Appeals are publicized in the monthly Amnesty International Newsletter. The cases are re-printed in many section and group newsletters, which appear usually monthly or bi-monthly.

For many years, Worldwide Appeals were known as the Campaign for Prisoners of the Month, and prisoners of conscience were profiled. The new focus reflects AI's concern with a widening range of victims of human rights violations.

The individuals who are featured in Worldwide Appeals are people who may already have been supported by particular AI groups. They may be prisoners who are extremely ill or who have been held in severe conditions for a long time, or they may be representative of a group

of prisoners needing extra efforts on their behalf. The cases are carefully chosen to reflect the overall diversity of AI's work.

The newsletter summarizes each case, gives addresses for letters, and calls for immediate mass appeals, petitions, and publicity.

Country Campaigns

From time to time, the movement organizes periods of intense activity aimed at stopping a pattern of human rights violations in a particular country.

Concentrated protests from many quarters are often the only way to put pressure on governments responsible for systematic abuses.

Country campaigns vary in their scope and duration. The design of any campaign is based on specific circumstances in the target country, and is determined by the Campaigning Unit and the Research Department, often following consultation with sections.

Some of these initiatives are intended to confront many concerns in the country. The International Secretariat invites most of AI's networks to take part, and because such large efforts usually last for several months, the movement holds only two or three each year.

"Limited" country campaigns happen more frequently and may focus on aspects of AI's mandate (such as the death penalty) in a particular country. Often, the International Secretariat invites participation by selected sections that are chosen for strategic reasons.

Every country campaign usually calls for a wide range of techniques -- domestic media approaches aimed at publicizing an AI report, mass appeals directed to many state officials, lobbying of sympathetic home government officials, outreach to community sectors with links to the country, perhaps demonstrations at its embassy, and fund-raising based on showing how every donation helps stop these abuses.

In coordinating these campaigns, the International Secretariat works closely with each section's campaign coordinator and country coordinator. A local group that joins a campaign often appoints a member or a small team to organize its involvement.

Theme and Awareness Campaigns

AI occasionally holds movement-wide campaigns that seek to achieve broad, long-term goals.

Theme campaigns address categories of abuse. In the mid-1980s, for example, the movement carried out a two-year campaign against torture.

During most of 1989, it conducted an ambitious worldwide campaign against executions and death penalty laws in 41 countries.

Awareness campaigns promote general support for AI or for human rights activism. The movement has organized education and awareness programs on the occasion of its own anniversaries and the anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Every October, AI holds a special action called Amnesty International Week. The International Executive Committee chooses a human rights theme, the International Secretariat selects cases to illustrate it, and the movement conducts a program of public activity. AI Week has drawn the world's attention to such issues as state violations against women and children, long-term prisoners, and the persecution of writers and journalists.

Each year, AI launches worldwide letter-writing and publicity actions on and around International Labour Day, International Women's Day, and Human Rights Day.

Domestic Campaigns

Some sections occasionally carry out domestic campaigns that confront particular human rights issues within their own borders.

Although AI members must not take up individual cases within their own countries, they can lobby their home governments to ratify international human rights covenants. They can (with the approval of AI's International Executive Committee) campaign for the repeal of legislation that may lead to violations of AI's mandate.

Some sections, for example, have organized mass membership campaigns against laws that permit the death penalty. Smaller actions have been aimed at safeguarding asylum-seekers by improving their country's refugee-determination policies. Section initiatives have sought to discourage the transfer of security equipment and skills to countries where they might be used in committing the human rights violations that AI opposes.

Specialized Resources, Extended Time

AI asks many of its groups to campaign on a single human rights issue for long periods, sometimes for years ...

- * to take advantage of the high level of energy and commitment sustained by activists who work on behalf of a clear and distinct concern, such as the plight of an individual victim

- * to maintain a constant level of pressure on the target

authorities in order to remind them that their victims are never forgotten

Traditionally, AI's work has been carried out by small circles of activists who focus on doing long-term letter-writing on behalf of individual victims of human rights violations. The adoption of prisoners of conscience by AI groups is the best known example of this basic approach.

As the movement has grown and as the patterns of human rights violations have changed, AI members have developed a range of new action forms. For example, Urgent Actions and a flexible choice of country, theme, and awareness initiatives are meant to confront life-threatening situations or else to protest broad patterns of abuse.

Long-term campaigning by groups, however, remains an essential part of AI's grassroots approach. The movement is constantly looking for new ways to apply it to dealing with the changing human rights picture.

In the 1990s, there are two forms of long-term action that local groups can carry out: Action Files and Regional Action Networks.

Action Files

Over the years, AI groups have accepted responsibility for different types of "dossiers" or "case sheets":

- * prisoner of conscience adoption dossiers
- * investigation dossiers
- * "disappearance" dossiers
- * death penalty dossiers
- * "action files", a recent form of long-term dossier that aims to confront a variety of themes and mandate areas

To simplify the organization of AI's work, the 1991 International Council Meeting decided that the movement will gradually replace all these dossiers with a single category to be called Action Files.

Each AI group can take responsibility for one or more Action Files.

Normally, an Action File will concern an individual, an event, or an issue in one country. The group's aim could be the release of a prisoner of conscience, finding out the circumstances of a "disappearance" or an extrajudicial execution, the introduction in the target country of certain legal safeguards or the withdrawal of certain laws, the abolition of the death penalty, and so on.

A group assigned an Action File will receive background materials, addresses for appeals, and advice on strategy and tactics. The recommended actions, however, will often not be expressed specifically, in terms of step-by-step instructions, but they will

be expressed broadly, in terms of the ultimate goal of the Action File.

Therefore, the specific activities that groups will undertake will often be left to the group itself to decide. A group with an Action File will plan its long-term campaigning on the basis of a strategic evaluation of its local resources and opportunities and its potential for bringing pressure to bear on the target government.

In some instances, not all the information required to carry out the campaigning program will be available. One of the tasks of the group and of the section's coordinator for the target country may be to supplement the information available to the research team at the International Secretariat.

Here are some examples of the campaigning goals that Action Files can address:

Adoption of Prisoners of Conscience

Once AI is convinced that a detainee is a prisoner of conscience, the case is assigned to one or several local groups around the world for adoption.

These groups are responsible for campaigning for the prisoner's immediate and unconditional release.

They send regular and countless appeals to the target government. They publicize the story in their community news outlets, ask local politicians to take up the cause, involve professionals and other influential groups, raise money to support their own activities and possibly to provide relief to the prisoner or the family, and hold demonstrations and other public events.

The work of groups on behalf of adoption cases is constant and unceasing. They continue to make relentless pressure until the case is resolved.

Investigation and "Disappearance" Cases

If AI's researchers believe that a person held in custody might be a prisoner of conscience, but they lack conclusive evidence, the case may be assigned to groups for investigation.

These groups do not demand the prisoner's release. Instead they make inquiries of the government to try to learn more about the case. Their function is to give some help to AI's researchers, and they limit their activity to asking questions of fact.

If the investigation should find that the detainee is not a prisoner of conscience (because, perhaps, the person had used violence), the case may be closed. If, however, the information that comes forward

confirms that the detainee is a prisoner of conscience, the case may then be changed to an adoption.

Occasionally, AI asks groups to investigate cases involving political prisoners who may have used violence.

When such prisoners are held without charge or trial, or have been convicted after unfair trials, AI may advise a group to send messages urging the authorities to respect the detainee's right to a fair trial or else to release the person from custody.

A third type of investigation inquires into "disappearances".

Groups assigned an Action File on a "disappearance" case send persistent messages to the authorities, asking if they know the whereabouts of the person who has "vanished" and calling for official inquiries. Often, these groups will also keep in touch with the families of the missing people.

Themes and Issues

An Action File could deal with practically any issue of concern to AI. It might confront, for example, extrajudicial executions, deaths in custody, or deaths as a result of torture.

An Action file could also mobilize a local group to carry out long-term appeals calling for an end to the death penalty in one specific country (or state within a country). Each such Action File could be assigned to several dozen AI groups worldwide.

Regional Action Networks

Networks of specialized AI groups, spanning different sections, respond promptly and expertly to a call for action on one world region or cluster of countries.

These Regional Action Networks (RANs) vary in size. Some RANs may consist of hundreds of member groups worldwide, while others may consist of only a few dozen groups. Some 21 RANs have been formed, and together they cover every country in the world.

It may be said that the RAN method is a combination of the approach taken by two other forms of AI action: long-term work on Action Files, and the rapid response of the Urgent Action scheme. Groups in a RAN are expected to keep informed about the human rights situation in their region of responsibility, and at the same time to be prepared to act quickly.

The International Secretariat asks groups in a RAN to take fast action in emergencies like short-term detention, "disappearances", or

imminent executions. It may also ask them to use their expertise to campaign on general concerns such as prison conditions or legislation, or to organize fund-raising for the purpose of relief. While groups in a RAN are asked to make a commitment to work on a region for a year or more, each specific action lasts from one to three months.

Groups in a RAN use the campaigning techniques that are appropriate to the concern -- rapid appeals and focused lobbying in the case of emergencies, a broader range of techniques for less urgent matters. The background information and requests for action are prepared by the International Secretariat and are distributed to groups via appointed RAN coordinators at section level.

An Evolving Campaign

Just as AI changes its mandate in response to changing patterns of human rights abuses, so too does the movement constantly try to revitalize the practical methods it uses to stop these abuses.

In the 1990s, AI has strengthened its worldwide networks by introducing more advanced communications technologies in order to spread the news of human rights violations faster and to wider audiences.

It has trained its activists to reach out to their communities and to integrate the proven tactic of letter-writing with a range of other techniques, such as publicity and fund-raising.

In the context of the consolidation of action forms into Action Files, it has assigned to groups new and innovative tasks that will draw upon the enthusiasm and creativity of their members.

It is experimenting with a system of "country linking" whereby special responsibilities are offered to sections based in countries that may have a unique influence on a target government.

AI is a permanent, evolving campaign. It encourages its activists at all levels to search continually for more effective means of putting pressure on governments that violate human rights.

"We have a voice only if we use it. If anyone says to me, 'It's so overwhelming, what can I do?' I answer, 'Take your pen and write a letter on behalf of one of Amnesty's prisoners'."

- writes one AI member

Chapter 5

AI ACTION

Advice and Guidelines

This chapter is a practical guide to AI's international campaign for human rights.

It gives advice about how you can work effectively in your own community to put pressure on governments -- pressure to safeguard the victims of human rights violations, to prevent similar violations from happening again, and to promote a long-term awareness of human rights and a commitment to their protection.

It draws on the experience of AI members and groups around the world, and shares their ideas for sending direct appeals, getting publicity in the news media, mobilizing local politicians to take up the cause, reaching out to other sectors of society, holding dramatic public events, and raising money to pay for these activities.

It sets out the most important rules and guidelines you should know in order to carry out this work within the mandate and policies of AI.

It shows how, with the help of your friends, neighbours, and others in your community, you can help set free a prisoner of conscience, ensure a fair trial for a political detainee, stop torture, save a person from execution, prevent "disappearances", or protect a refugee from being sent back to persecution.

A note about the format

The information in this chapter is organized into self-contained "packages" or units. These units are designed to enable users of this handbook to copy and distribute them to other AI members. They are meant to be portable "tools" that can help many more activists carry out their AI work more effectively.

Use copying equipment to create ...

- * background leaflets to accompany Urgent Action case sheets
- * handouts for use in training sessions on Outreach
- * booklets for the benefit of group members who have volunteered for specific tasks, such as coordinating the group's Regional Action Network

Be mindful that these units do not try to cover every aspect of each particular topic. If you have questions about any area of AI's work, please consult the full handbook, or contact your section office or, if there is no section, the International Secretariat.

AI GROUPS

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT - THE FUNDAMENTALS

Membership

AI encourages all persons who support the movement's objectives and principles to become members.

Many members participate in AI by joining and working with groups that are based in their everyday community. This community might be their local neighbourhood, village or town, or it might be their workplace, school, or place of worship.

To help safeguard the movement's principle of impartiality, each AI group should aim to have a broad-based membership. People with different backgrounds and political orientations should be invited to join and participate.

New Groups

In different parts of the movement, new AI groups are known by different terms: "groups-in-formation", "developing groups", "groups-under-establishment", "pre-groups", or "initiative groups".

Each new group participates in a training period that usually lasts approximately six months. During this time, the members carry out a limited campaigning program while they concentrate on learning about AI and on building the group's resources.

Once its members have demonstrated that they have the knowledge and the means to do consistent, effective campaigning, the group is accredited in the movement -- that is, it is authorized to represent AI in its local community, to speak in AI's name, and to take on the full range of AI group tasks.

The process of group training and accreditation takes different forms in different parts of the movement. Activists who wish to start an AI group should contact their section office or, in countries where there is no section, the International Secretariat.

The Role of an AI Group

The role of the AI group is to campaign on AI's concerns:

- * to make direct appeals on behalf of the victims of human rights violations -- by sending letters, telexes, telegrams, making telephone calls, and organizing delegations

- * to enlist the support of others in AI's work -- by creating publicity,

distributing AI's information, and involving in its activities individuals and other community groups and organizations

* to contribute to the financial support of the movement -- by raising money

Commonly, these activities are carried out in the context of:

* large-scale AI campaigns that focus on particular countries or human rights issues

* actions that address individual concerns, such as Urgent Action case sheets, Worldwide Appeals, or Action Bulletin cases

* long-term group work undertaken in agreement with the International Secretariat, such as responsibility for an Action File or membership in a Regional Action Network

What Every Group Must Do

1. An AI group is an official unit of the organization, and it represents the movement in its local community. Every group, therefore, must observe the AI Statute and the fundamental principles of the organization as set out in the Amnesty International Handbook. Every group must ...

* be committed to the entire AI mandate, and, if it is the only group in its area, strive to campaign actively across the full range of mandate issues during the course of the year

* ensure political impartiality and independence in its campaigning

* observe the decisions of the elected governing bodies of the movement

* operate in an open and independent way, and, if it is the only group in its area, aim to attract members from the widest possible spectrum of society

2. Because every AI group is expected to maintain a reasonable and consistent level of campaigning activity, it should ensure that it ...

* has at least five active members

* establishes a coordinating structure -- an executive board or planning committee that holds office and that functions with the general support of the group

* keeps a reliable mailing address

* develops and carries out training programs for its members

* reports on its activities every six or 12 months to the section or to the International Secretariat

* maintains a financial base adequate to support its own work and to allow for contributions to the international movement

3. Every AI group should operate in a way that does not violate the law of its own country.

Leadership Roles

To function efficiently, every group will wish to assign roles or tasks to its members. How this is done will depend on the group's size, resources, and cultural context.

Commonly, AI groups maintain at least ...

- * a **contact person** who may also act as general chairperson and overall coordinator

- * a **treasurer** to handle the group's finances and its bank account

- * a **secretary** to record decisions and keep a register of members

New or developing groups are strengthened by the appointment of a person to organize fund-raising projects and a person to recruit and welcome new members.

As well, groups often assign to specific people the responsibility for making approaches to the news media or to officials in the home government.

If the group is large and has many resources, it may appoint a member or even a small team to organize areas of activity such as Urgent Actions, Action Files, country campaigns, or special events.

Renewing the Leadership

To ensure fresh ideas and a revitalization of the work, each group should consider handing over its management to new leaders regularly and systematically.

One way that groups can foster new leaders in key posts is by designating "apprentices" or alternates. These people receive their training in the course of helping to carry out ongoing activities.

Making Decisions

AI has no formal procedures setting out the way groups must choose leaders, settle disputes, or make other decisions. Groups differ widely on how they deal with such matters.

There is a basic expectation, however, that AI members will cooperate to build within the movement an atmosphere of understanding, mutual support, and democracy.

When everyone can take part in discussions and decision-making, the morale, motivation, and energy of activists will remain high, and the work that they do will have more impact.

Meetings

Wherever in the world the group may be situated, whatever its size or structure, the routine of the typical AI group will revolve around meetings. For its work to be effective, its meetings should be efficiently run.

Most groups choose to meet once a month, although many operate on a different schedule. To allow members to plan their time, and to publicize the group in the community, in general the meetings are held at a regular time and place.

Group members themselves should determine the meeting's style of discussion. Some groups hold relaxed, informal meetings, while others prefer to conduct business on the basis of rules of order.

Here are a few tips for holding effective meetings -- meetings that move the group toward the achievement of its goals:

- * set an agenda

Agree on the basic purpose of each meeting: is it to train new members? to practice letter-writing? to plan for the coming year?

- * try to make clear, realistic decisions

When considering whether to undertake an activity, ask: Who will carry out this task? When? What will the project cost? How will it fit into our general plans?

- * delegate

Entrust people with tasks. Foster leadership, and create a feeling of "belonging" to the group by sharing responsibilities and by involving every member in its work.

- * keep notes

Take minutes of the decisions made -- which member agreed to do what and when. Record important questions that went unanswered.

- * evaluate the meeting itself

At the end of each meeting, ask the participants: What was good about this meeting? What would they like to see changed at the next meeting?

- * follow-up

Find out the answers to the unanswered questions and check that the decisions made were carried out. Report to the group at its next meeting.

To enliven meetings ...

- * invite a speaker, such as an experienced AI member, a former prisoner of conscience, or a local journalist or academic who can give a talk on human rights

- * show an AI film or slide-show

- * carry out a project, such as creating a display

- * be sure the agenda is balanced with a mix of business and social time -- build in a regular break or rest period when people can relax

Make a Plan

It is futile for an AI group to aspire to reach all the human rights goals that need to be achieved. Each group, therefore, should develop a plan of action.

To make a plan is simply to make a choice of goals -- the group decides that it will take on a limited range of tasks. It chooses tasks that will most effectively use the group's unique skills, resources, and energies.

- * a plan makes it easy to see your goals

AI is interested in results. Its members seek to bring about real change in the world. A plan is inspiring. It gives members a clear, focused vision of their goals.

- * a plan makes it easy to reach your goals

A plan unites. It creates a shared understanding of a desired outcome and reduces the chance of confusion and conflict. If people agree on the ends to be achieved, they will more readily agree on the steps that must be taken to reach them.

the person feel welcome. Experienced members can volunteer to act as "friends" with newcomers and to be on hand to answer their questions

* Suggest to new participants that they leave their names and addresses on an attendance sheet so that they can be kept informed about group news and involved in the group's activities

* One good way to encourage first-time visitors to return to the group is simply to give them something to do. Show that AI is an activist organization that carries out practical, public work. Invite the visitor to make a commitment: sign a petition, write an appeal on an Urgent Action, make a donation, join a march. Ask the person what special skills he or she can bring to the work of the group.

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Every Voice Makes a Difference

Many human rights activists campaign effectively by working as individuals.

It may be that there is no AI group established near their home. Or, they may not be in a position to attend group activities. Or they may prefer to work independently.

Here are some practical ways an individual activist can support AI's struggle for human rights:

- * join the Urgent Action network and send emergency appeals
- * subscribe to the Worldwide Appeals (or the Action Bulletin) and build around it a program of routine activity
- * distribute to libraries and bookstores in your community AI's publications and reports
- * alert your own political representatives to AI's concerns
- * donate money to AI
- * carry the AI message to your families, friends, neighbours, and colleagues
- * wear an AI t-shirt or badge
- * write letters to the editor of your local newspaper about international human rights concerns
- * when reports of human rights abuses appear in your local newspaper, clip the story and mail it to the embassy of the offending country with a short note asking politely whether the story is true
- * join a group, but ask if you can receive its information (such as

its Action File materials) by mail or by some other means

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TEAMWORK - COORDINATING ACTIVITIES

AI's task is to protect the dignity and security of people.

AI's instrument in this task is the credibility of its statements.

AI is hundreds of thousands of people working together for the same cause. Every member is part of the worldwide team, and every member is responsible for making sure that AI -- while speaking in its many voices -- sends a consistent message to the world.

Today's instant global communications make it vital that AI's statements -- whether made in Mexico, Sweden or Japan, or whether made by a local group or by the International Secretariat -- are based on the same accurate information and reflect the movement's common mandate and policy.

To ensure that their statements are accurate and credible, sections and groups should take three measures:

- * assign responsibilities carefully and clearly

Appoint experienced and reliable people to take charge of sensitive areas of work, such as press relations and approaches to politicians. Circulate up-to-date lists of these assignments to others in the movement who will normally deal with these people. Let everyone know who is responsible for specific tasks.

- * alert others to projects that are being planned

Before launching any new action, check -- as early as possible -- with the section office, other groups, or other parts of the movement that could be affected by the project or that may have a reasonable interest in knowing about it.

- * as the project moves forward, tell others what is happening

Report, as appropriate, to groups or other sections, to your section office, to the country coordinator, or to the International Secretariat. Ask: Who needs to be kept informed?

These three steps build good working relationships, help to send clear, consistent messages to the world, and increase the movement's effectiveness.

Good coordination: practical examples

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Asking for Support

When AI makes an appeal to a target government, our message is usually strengthened if it arrives in different forms from many members situated all over the world.

On the other hand, when AI asks other bodies to support its work, our request is more likely to be successful if it is sent in a direct fashion by the most appropriate part of the movement.

To accomplish this, AI observes a general guideline: any formal approach seeking to involve other bodies in the support of its work is the responsibility of the parallel level of AI.

The International Executive Committee and the International Secretariat organize approaches to international bodies, for example:

- > Intergovernmental organizations, such as the International Labour Organisation
- > International non-governmental organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross
- > International news services, such as the BBC World Service, Agence France Presse, or the Middle East News Agency
- > Leaders of major religions, such as the Pope
- > The world's population as a whole, such as in the case of global fund-raising or worldwide awareness campaigns

Sections generally take charge of approaches to national bodies, for example:

- > National levels of non-governmental organizations
- > National associations of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, and national trade unions
- > Domestic news services and mass media, such as a country-wide television network, or a highly influential newspaper
- > Senior government officials and the national parliament
- > Religious figures with a national profile
- > The country's general population

Local groups are usually responsible for approaches to regional and local bodies, for example:

- > Local or regional bodies of non-governmental organizations or professional associations, such as regional bar associations or trade union locals
- > Local community newspapers, radio and television
- > Municipal politicians or district representatives of the national parliament
- > Community religious figures
- > The local population

SECURITY OF INFORMATION

AI members are expected to treat information responsibly.

AI's information may have an impact on the personal safety of those for whom the movement works, as well as of its members. People may be placed at risk if sensitive material is not handled confidentially.

All circulars issued by the International Secretariat to sections, to coordination groups, or to groups are marked either

INTERNAL (for AI members only)

or

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

INTERNAL documents are for circulation to AI members only. They contain recommendations for action and information for members.

INTERNAL documents must be securely stored. Under no circumstances should they be given to journalists, government officials or other organizations, sent to contacts within the country concerned, or given to people who are not AI members.

Letters from the International Secretariat -- even if they do not contain confidential information -- are INTERNAL documents, and should not be circulated outside the membership.

Action Files and other materials issued by the International Secretariat often carry detailed security advice that should be observed by AI members. When such files and materials are re-packaged (for example, for the benefit of the local press) confidential information should be withheld.

Often, an EXTERNAL document will be accompanied by some INTERNAL pages. Care should be taken to ensure that the INTERNAL pages are detached before the document is copied.

When sections and groups reproduce, re-package or translate INTERNAL documents for distribution among their members, these new documents should also be clearly marked INTERNAL.

EXTERNAL documents may be used by anyone. They contain important information for sections, groups, the public, and other organizations. They should be reproduced, translated, and freely circulated.

AI AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

A fundamental part of AI's approach is inviting other organizations to support its goals. Outreach is an important component of AI

campaigning, and groups and sections are expected to try to involve other bodies in the movement's program.

Similarly, other organizations often ask AI to support their activities. Trade unions, other human rights monitors, and exile or refugee groups frequently approach AI and ask it to take part in their public events and to endorse their goals.

To avoid misunderstandings about AI's limited mandate, and to safeguard its independence and impartiality, AI must exercise care when it works with other organizations. This is especially important when the cooperation involves any public or formal activity.

What AI Can Do

AI can work together with other organizations in many ways, for example:

- * AI gives EXTERNAL information to other organizations. Outreach work, in large part, involves distributing AI action material to specific sectors of the community
- * AI sends speakers to other organization's events (except news conferences) to give talks on matters within AI's mandate
- * AI receives information from other organizations. Exile and refugee groups, for example, often give AI valuable research information
- * AI collaborates with other bodies in campaigning on broad themes that fall within the movement's mandate, such as torture or the death penalty
- * AI takes part, as one identifiable organization among many, in public events such as parades or fairs that are open to a wide range of organizations
- * AI works jointly with other organizations on general human rights education projects

Needless to say, individual members of AI are free to support publicly any cause or organization they wish -- provided they do so in their personal capacities and not as representatives of AI.

Guest Speakers *****

AI groups sometimes invite to their meetings speakers who have concerns that go beyond AI's mandate.

Such people might appear as personal witnesses to human rights violations, or they might be scholars or journalists who can help put AI's campaigning into a more meaningful context.

In each case, it should be made clear to the group that the speaker's views on matters outside the AI mandate are strictly his or her own.

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Where AI Takes Precautions

Whenever another organization asks for AI's support, AI groups and sections should consider:

Is it possible that AI's participation in this activity will lead to public confusion about the movement's mandate, or risk damaging its reputation for independence and impartiality?

When in doubt about what to do, consult your section office or, if there is no section, the International Secretariat.

Apart from the situations listed above, AI does not normally work together in a public or formal manner with other bodies.

As a rule, AI does not, jointly with other bodies ... sponsor public meetings, hold demonstrations, conduct news conferences, issue statements or publications, sign resolutions or appeals, or endorse conclusions or recommendations.

Explaining the Rule

Other organizations may express disappointment that AI is not always able to support their demonstrations and appeals.

It should be explained to them that AI's independence and impartiality -- both in practice and in the eyes of the public -- help to ensure the effectiveness of the movement's work on behalf of victims of human rights violations.

This policy does not reflect either approval or disapproval of the aims, policies or judgments of other organizations.

When AI's policy on joint activities is explained carefully to them, most can appreciate and accept the movement's position, especially if they see that it applies consistently to all other bodies.

Project planning: strategies for success

Within AI, the term "campaigning" refers generally to any systematic activity by the membership designed to create pressure in support of the movement's mandate goals.

AI campaigning can take many different forms. Here are just a few examples ...

- a three-month action to stop executions in an Asian country
- a long-term adoption of a prisoner of conscience in an African country
- a two-year involvement in the Western Europe Regional Action Network
- a series of newspaper articles designed to raise community awareness about "disappearances" in the Americas

Often, in creating an action plan for the movement, the International Secretariat invites specific sections to take part if it feels they can wield a special influence on a target country. Likewise, in launching any particular action, AI sections will make strategic choices about involving specific groups, networks and other campaigning resources that may be available.

Similarly, an AI group that has decided to carry out any type of action will be faced with a wide range of choices. It will find many ways to draw upon the resources of the group itself and of its community.

Just as your group should create an annual plan to guide its overall program, it should also make a plan to guide each project that is in this program.

A good project plan will help your group select from its many options, use its resources in an efficient way, and make a greater impact on the target government. A plan will ...

- * inspire your group's members with a clear vision of their goals
- * unite your members with a shared understanding of the steps they must take to reach the goals
- * give them a framework in which to assess their success and to learn from their experience in the project.

Ten Steps to Project Planning

How a group chooses to go about making a plan depends on the group's style and situation, and on the details of the project before it.

Here is a basic outline for organizing any type of AI action project:

1. **Start early**

Begin consideration of the project well in advance of its launch date. Facilities may have to be booked, and people will need to schedule their own time.

To help get an early start, watch the movement's action calendar (issued by the International Secretariat or via section newsletters) where major activities are announced.

2. Decide on involvement

No AI group is expected to join in every action on the movement's calendar. At the same time, every group is expected to maintain a reasonable and consistent level of campaigning activity.

Members of the group should make a collective decision on its participation in any particular project. The group itself is the best judge of whether the project fits into its annual plan, and whether it has the members, time, and resources to do a good job.

3. Decide on level of involvement

If the group does decide to take part in a project, its members should also agree on the broad level of their involvement: Roughly what proportion of your group's time and energy will it devote to this activity?

4. Appoint leaders

Ensure the overall coordination and management of the project. In some instances, responsibility could be delegated to one person. In others, a small team of group members could be formed.

5. List resources

Before the project team defines its specific aims, it makes an inventory of the resources at its disposal.

It lists resources available from the section or from the International Secretariat. It also makes a list of the local opportunities for bringing pressure on the target government -- skills that exist in the group or in the community, contacts who may have a special influence, social or political forces that can be exploited.

6. Identify goals

For every AI campaign or action that the organization undertakes, the International Secretariat develops an overall, movement-wide strategy.

Each campaign is designed to achieve "mandate" goals -- the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political detainees, the lifting of death sentences, and so on. Each campaign also carries a list of "recommended actions" -- letter-writing to an array of officials in the target country, outreach to key social sectors, lobbying of the home government, and so forth.

To help guide its local campaigning, a group will establish its own local strategy.

Each group will consider how it can make the most effective contribution to the international strategy. One way to do this is to **compare the international goals and recommended actions with the resources at the group's disposal**, and to create a plan of action that reflects the common points.

The group's project team will ask itself questions such as these: Which of the International Secretariat's recommended actions can we carry out well in this community? What unique contribution to the worldwide action can we make by drawing upon the interests and skills of our own members and our own neighbourhood.

If, for example, one of the recommended actions is mass appeals, the group may identify ...

GOAL: Take advantage of the facilities offered by the local trade union, and design, print and distribute a thousand postcards

If a recommended action is publicity, the group may identify ...

GOAL: Get an interview with the local radio station, where the manager is a well-known AI supporter

If a recommended action is lobbying, the group may identify ...

GOAL: Persuade a local politician, said to have a growing interest in international affairs, to raise the campaign issue during a speech in the assembly

The group's campaign goals should be expressed simply and clearly, and if possible, in terms that can be observed or measured.

Each of the three goals above states simply and clearly what the group intends to achieve, in terms that will make it easy to know whether it has been successful.

7. Set priorities

By this point, a group may realize that it has identified a long list of goals -- more perhaps than it can realistically hope to accomplish.

If this is the case, the project team must say "yes" to some goals and "no" to others. It does this by asking the question: Which of these goals will help our group create the most effective pressure?

The team must now choose to tackle certain goals and to set the others aside, perhaps for a different occasion.

* send to the local **newspaper** a feature story describing the group's **postcard** appeal

* encourage a **children's organization** to **lobby** the national government on behalf of human rights protection for children

* organize a **button day** during which AI badges are distributed on the street and **donations** are accepted

MEDIA AND PUBLICITY

Publicity has always been one of AI's most powerful techniques for putting pressure on governments that violate human rights.

Every part of the organization plays a key role in getting AI's message published in newspapers, and broadcast on radio and television.

Many Voices, One Message -- Coordination of Media Work

Local groups are responsible for approaches to their community media. Sections deal with their national media. And the International Secretariat handles contacts with international media such as major news services and international radio and television.

Because different parts of AI are working simultaneously to publicize the movement's message, it is crucial for AI's image and credibility that these efforts be coordinated. If the movement expects to be taken seriously, the information it presents to the world must be consistent.

Your group can help safeguard the consistency of the AI message by observing the following practices:

- * do not send material to national publications or broadcasting stations without first checking with the section. AI's work can be damaged if major news organizations are faced with uncoordinated statements
- * do not send news material to the press outside your own country. In special circumstances, members may be asked to write letters to foreign publications; however, press approaches to foreign media risk conflicting with the work of other AI groups or sections or the International Secretariat
- * do not send material to international news agencies or to international radio and television networks, all of which are in regular contact with the International Secretariat
- * do work closely with other AI groups that may be based in the same local area to make the most effective use of the media

The Group's Media Contact Person

The best way your group can ensure that its media approaches are coordinated is to appoint an experienced member as its media contact person. This person can be responsible for ...

- * keeping in touch with the section's media staff, or, in countries without a section, with the International Secretariat

- * becoming familiar with the local media community, and building a relationship of mutual respect and confidence with the journalists

- * developing skills in handling interviews and other tasks, and passing these skills to other group members

- * arranging all contacts between other group members and local journalists, and monitoring these contacts to ensure the consistency of the message

- * answering any questions that come from journalists

- * adapting AI news releases to the community, and issuing them to the local media

The News Release

One of the easiest and least expensive methods of sending information to the media is the news release. Here are some tips on creating an effective release:

- * make it clear that the local group -- and not the section or the international movement -- is the body issuing the news release. The first thing the editor should see is the name and address of the group, and the last thing the name and telephone number of a local contact person

- * if there is an embargo date restricting release of the information, state plainly on a line by itself:

"For Release: (date)"

- * provide a short, simple headline

- * the text should be brief -- usually no more than two pages -- and the style should be clear. A long complicated document may be thrown away, or may be rewritten so much that the message will be lost

- * present the most important point in the opening sentence

- * emphasize the local angle. Mention any colourful event or prominent personality who may figure in the story. Create the image of this community playing a part in the struggle against human rights violations around the world

- * always say what AI is, and say it early in the text. Even a short phrase will do: "Amnesty International, the worldwide human rights movement ... "

- * type and double-space the news release

- * make certain that the contact person is well-informed about AI and about the subject of the news release, and can answer questions accurately

Publicity Ideas

* when planning a public event, such as a demonstration or a fund-raising project, visualize and design it in such a way that it will attract the media's cameras. Make it dramatic and photogenic

* send to the news media announcements of the group's routine events, including its regular information tables and its general meetings

* remember that high-profile people are usually fond of getting publicity and that their presence often draws the media. Invite two or three dignitaries who are known AI supporters -- and who represent a range of political viewpoints -- to attend AI's public events

* when lobbying your home government on a human rights issue (such as legislation concerning the death penalty, or ratification of a human rights standard) strengthen the pressure by writing to the letters-to-the-editor columns of newspapers

* in interviews or articles, make mention of any current action project, and encourage the public to help

* don't forget to work with the specialized media -- trade union newspapers, professional newsletters, or radio and television programs that report on issues relating to concerns of women, youth, and children

* look for free media services. Many newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations will provide space and time for community-oriented "public service announcements"

* strengthen the impact of your direct appeals by enclosing local newspaper clippings that report on human rights concerns in the target country

* distribute AI's major documents and reports to schools, libraries, and bookstores, and make a special effort to publicize the appearance of the yearly Amnesty International Report

* don't overlook such "street media" as telegraph poles, billboards and public notice boards where information can be posted

AI's Message - Basic Guidelines

Groups will often adapt, re-package, or translate AI information to make it more appropriate for their own local audience. Whenever materials are re-formatted and issued in this manner, groups should ensure that they continue to respect ...

* AI's mandate.

AI does not report or comment on human rights abuses outside

its mandate.

Background information in its publications should never overshadow the description of matters of concern to AI, or give the impression the organization is taking a stand on issues that are not within its mandate. An article on a subject not based on AI research should be accompanied by the disclaimer that it "does not necessarily reflect the views or research findings of AI".

* AI's accuracy

AI's information must conform to the highest standards of accuracy. It must distinguish clearly between allegations and facts.

* AI's impartiality

AI's information must be presented in a way that makes it clear that the movement does not support or oppose any government or political system, take sides in political conflicts, or endorse the views of the people whose rights it seeks to protect.

AI does not engage in name-calling. It does not, for example, label governments "regimes" or "dictatorships", or describe their leaders as "reactionary" or "despotic". It does not use slighting or scornful labels in describing political or other organizations.

DIRECT APPEALS

Letter-writing

Writing letters is a simple, effective way to put direct pressure on powerful officials. It is one of the basic techniques used by AI to fight human rights violations.

Letters need not be long or detailed or beautifully composed. You do not have to show an awareness of complex political matters. You do not have to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of international law.

For your letter to make an impact, all you have to do is express your sincere concern about victims of human rights violations and end the letter with a plain request.

When sending an AI appeal, you must ...

- * be courteous

Always be polite and respectful. Your goal is to help the victims, not to berate the government. Officials do not respond positively to abusive messages. A good approach is to assume that officials are open to reason and discussion.

- * show that you know the facts

Present enough details about the case history to demonstrate that you are well-informed. Make it plain that people all over the world are aware of events in the target country and are personally concerned about the victims of human rights violations.

- * be impartial

Avoid political comments. Stress that your concern for human rights is not politically motivated but is in line with basic principles of international law.

- * follow any specific instructions given by AI in each case

Make the exact request that AI's background material asks you to make. If, for example, an Urgent Action calls for medical treatment for a detainee, be sure to appeal specifically for this, and not for release, or for fair trial, or for some other demand that might be the right one to make in a different case.

There are instances where AI warns that your letters should make no mention of the organization itself. Be sure that this alert is observed by every person sending an appeal. A link with AI may sometimes harm the interests of a prisoner or the person's family.

In cases where AI suggests that members write directly to a prisoner or to the family, take extreme care to follow the instructions

precisely.

In your letters you may also ...

- * say who you are. Make reference to your personal background, such as your interests, training or occupation. This shows that the letter is genuine, and that people from various walks of life are following events in the country

- * give a short description of AI -- if it is safe to mention the organization. Be sure to stress the movement's political impartiality

- * refer briefly to relevant articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When you are asked to cite another human rights standard or the constitution of the target country, AI provides whatever information you will need

- * mention any positive connection you may have had with the target country, such as a visit you have made or hope to make, or studies of the country you have carried out. At the same time, express your concern for the country's international image and its reputation for justice

- * encourage dialogue. Make a specific request in line with the instructions AI gives in each case. Ask the official to send you a reply. Remember to provide your address or the mailing address of your AI group

Generally, a short letter will be as effective as a long letter. A good rule is to limit the message to one side of one page.

To ensure that the letter is legible, print or type it.

Write clearly and simply, in your own style and in your own language. Sometimes, AI will suggest that, if possible, letters be written in specific languages. If the target country maintains an embassy in your country, direct the letter there -- most embassies have staff who can translate local correspondence for forwarding to the home government. Even if you can provide a translation in which you have confidence, it is a good idea to send the original with the translation.

AI's action material always provides the title and address of the authorities to whom each appeal should be directed.

How to Start and End Your Letters *****

There are no strict rules about how to address important officials at the opening and closing of letters. AI's material usually suggests the best form to use in specific instances. Here is a general guide:

If you are writing to:	Start your letter:
Heads of State, such as Presidents	Your Excellency
Kings, queens and other monarchs	Your Majesty
Prime Ministers	Dear Prime Minister
Other ministers	Dear Minister
Diplomats of ambassadorial rank	Your Excellency
Judges	Your Honour

All letters can be closed with the simple Yours truly, or Yours sincerely, or with the slightly more formal Yours respectfully and sincerely.

*

As a general rule, write about once a month on each concern. If you cannot afford to post many letters abroad, mail them instead care of the target country's embassy in your own country.

Maintain a record of the letters you send so that you will be better able to respond properly in the event you get a reply. Make copies if that is convenient, or keep a log of the letters.

When you do receive a reply, acknowledge it immediately as a matter of courtesy. At the same time, send a copy to your section office or to the International Secretariat. These offices may then suggest points you can make in your formal response.

If you do not receive a reply from the government within a reasonable time, send a polite query.

Although state officials fail to acknowledge most of the appeals that are sent to them, you should never be discouraged. Governments take note of the sheer volume of letters, and they receive the repeated messages that the letters contain. AI has seen striking examples of the effect of letter-writing in achieving improvements in human rights, even though the letters were never acknowledged.

Every letter -- whether acknowledged or not -- makes an impact. Every letter plays a part in sustaining the constant collective pressure.

Ideas

For making your group's letter-writing more effective:

- * look for ways to build letter-writing into other activities such as public events or fund-raising projects
- * increase the pressure by sending a copy of every letter of appeal also to the target government's local embassy
- * make a special letter-writing effort during the run-up to the country's national day or to the birthday of its leader
- * enclose with your letter clippings from your local newspaper that make reference to the human rights situation in the target country
- * ask doctors, lawyers and other professionals to send appeals on their business stationery
- * HIGHLIGHT the name of the person who is the focus of the appeal so that it stands out from the text -- especially if you believe that the addressee may not be able to read your language
- * to get more attention at the receiving end, send "registered" letters that require a signature of receipt by the addressee
- * use word-processing computers to make it easier to send a standard text to many officials, or to readily produce individual, personal letters for members of the general public to sign and mail
- * organize 24-hour mass letter-writing events during which people can not only send appeals but also make donations to help pay for postage stamps

Here is an example of a letter of appeal that reflects many of the points above:

Your Excellency,

I am a teacher of history at our local school. In company with colleagues, students, and friends, I am a member of Amnesty International. Today, I write to you out of concern for, a prisoner held under the Internal Security Act.

I take part in Amnesty International because it is an independent humanitarian movement. It works, worldwide, for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners, and the abolition of torture and executions.

The organization is politically impartial -- it takes no stand for or against any government or political system, but is concerned only with human rights.

In my profession, I have the pleasure of often reading about your country. I have grown to feel an admiration and respect for it and -- I hope -- some understanding of its current problems.

According to reports in our national newspapers, your officials have given no reason for the detention of, who has never been charged with any crime.

As you know, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights insists upon the fundamental right of every person to a fair and prompt trial.

I urge you to take a personal interest in this case. Will you please assure me that will be either charged and tried fairly or released from detention as soon as possible?

I look forward to hearing from you about this important matter.

Yours respectfully and sincerely,

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It is not always necessary to write such a long letter. Here is an example of a simple, polite message that lets officials know that concerned people around the world are aware of what is happening:

++++
+
Dear Prime Minister,

Many people in our community are worried about a newspaper story we have read. We enclose a copy in this envelope.

It says that ten trade unionists were arrested in your capital city last week, and that they have not been seen since.

If this report is true, will you please tell us where they are?

Yours sincerely,
++++
+

You can reinforce the impact of your letters by launching other types of direct appeals at the same time.

As with letter-writing, the rules are: be polite, give the facts, avoid political jargon, make a request, and follow carefully any instructions that AI may make in specific cases.

petition is the first step leading to long-term involvement in human rights work.

A petition can also help to raise public awareness about human rights when the number of signatures becomes a news item in itself. AI used this approach during its 1988 Human Rights Now! campaign, when its appeal for observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gathered countless thousands of endorsements worldwide.

Telegrams

Brief messages of concern are sent by telegram in emergency cases, such as in response to Urgent Actions. Here are examples:

RESPECTFULLY URGE CLEMENCY FOR ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS.

STRONGLY URGE PROTECTION AGAINST FORCIBLE REPATRIATION TO WHERE IMPRISONMENT AS PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE AND TORTURE FEARED LIKELY.

GREATLY DISTURBED DISAPPEARANCE OF PRISONER REMOVED FROM CELL 16 OCTOBER. RESPECTFULLY SEEK ASSURANCES HER SAFETY.

New Technologies

Letters, postcards, petitions and telegrams are not the only means whereby human rights appeals can be delivered to foreign officials. In recent years, AI members and groups have been ...

- * using FAX (facsimile) transmission systems to convey letters
- * plugging into E-mail (electronic mail) networks
- * creating direct voice appeals on audio-tapes that are then sent by regular post
- * producing "video petitions", often using the screen presence of well-known actors or other prominent public figures

When in doubt about the security of these approaches, or about their appropriateness in particular circumstances, check with your section or, where there is no section, with the International Secretariat.

Visual

Appeal

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One picture is worth a thousand words.

To send a strong message, send a photograph -- of your information table, poster display, or demonstration -- in which members of the public are shown to be concerned. Simply mail it to the target government with a short note of explanation.

Be sure that the photo includes portraits (or names) of individual victims of abuses. That way the authorities will see that people in your country are hearing AI's message and are interested in knowing the facts.

If you have the resources, turn the photo into a mini-postcard action by sending one copy -- openly, in the manner of a postcard -- to every official on your list of government authorities.

%%%

Delegations DDD

Meetings with diplomats or with visiting officials of a target government allow face-to-face exchange and a rare chance to hear the authorities' direct response to AI's concerns.

Usually, embassy visits are planned and carried out by section-level representatives of AI in consultation with the International Secretariat. Groups that wish to send a delegation or take part in one should contact their section office or, where there is no section, the International Secretariat.

- * make the delegation small -- about three people -- and brief each person fully on the issues to be raised
- * divide the responsibility for different points among the members of the delegation -- one person can ask about an individual victim, another about legislative safeguards, and so on
- * make one or two specific requests. Will the official forward a letter to the government? Will he or she inquire about a particular detainee?
- * ask -- politely but firmly -- for official reports to back up any statements that contradict AI's information
- * try to sustain the dialogue. Arrange with the official for a follow-up meeting
- * provide the International Secretariat with a report of the visit

HOME GOVERNMENT APPROACHES

The influence wielded by domestic government officials can make a forceful impression in support of any AI campaign.

AI's mandate covers a range of matters that concern politicians of all shades of opinion. What's more, government officials are often victims of human rights violations. Many politicians are likely to react sympathetically to an AI approach.

Groups should try to establish good links with their local political officials, meet with them regularly, and ask them to help with both international and domestic concerns.

Coordination

Politicians are busy people who receive many requests for help. If they are to respond positively to AI, every approach must be carefully planned and coordinated.

Local groups commonly take responsibility for approaches to municipal or regional politicians, and to local representatives to the national assembly. Section-level governing bodies, staff or volunteers deal with senior government officials and with the national assembly as a body.

To guard against conflicting requests being made of the same official, therefore, groups should maintain contact with ...

- * the section's coordinator for home government approaches
- * any other AI groups that are based in the same constituency

To ensure this coordination, each group (being mindful of its limited resources and its overall plan) should consider appointing an experienced member to take charge of this area of work. The most important task of this person is to develop a long-term relationship of trust and confidence between the group and the government official.

Lobbying ... for help in international campaigning

Just as AI might approach any influential sector of society, groups reach out to government officials, senior administrators and political parties, and ask them to join in AI's international campaigning.

They invite political figures to take advantage of their prominent positions and wide contacts to help AI make a stronger appeal to foreign government authorities.

Here are some practical approaches a local group can make:

- * ask the person to send appeals to the target government on

official letterhead

- * remind the official to promote general human rights awareness in all speeches and public appearances

- * encourage the official to use international meetings, such as the world congresses of political parties, to present AI's message to counterparts in target governments

- * suggest that the person raise your group's concern in the assembly and also forward the official record of the speech to the target government

- * arrange with the official to alert the group to opportunities for contact with foreign authorities during upcoming international meetings, visits, or exchanges

- * invite members of political parties to speak to AI group meetings about their policies on human rights issues

- * enquire whether the AI group can speak to local branches of political parties about AI's mandate and work

- * enlist the support of a non-partisan range of political figures in any local media approach, public event or fund-raising drive

Lobbying ... on a domestic concern

AI members, when acting publicly on behalf of the movement, must not campaign against specific human rights violations that take place in their own country. This rule safeguards the impartiality of the organization's work and the principle of the international protection of human rights.

AI members may campaign publicly in favour of certain measures that support the AI mandate:

- * legislation that abolishes or limits the death penalty

- * ratification of international human rights standards

- * laws or regulations that encourage human rights education programs for public officials and security personnel

Members may campaign also for domestic legislation that discourages violations elsewhere:

- * laws that safeguard refugees or asylum-seekers who are threatened with return to a country where they risk being held as prisoners of conscience, or subject to "disappearance", torture or execution (AI may also ask government officials to take action in favour of individual asylum-seekers)

* laws preventing the international transfer of military or police equipment or expertise that may be used to commit human rights violations

Lobbying for legislative changes such as these is generally initiated by the section, often in consultation with the International Secretariat. In some cases, the approval of the International Secretariat or of AI's International Executive Committee is required before such an initiative is launched.

Whenever any such campaigns are being considered, sections and groups must coordinate their activities carefully. A well-timed combination of high-level and local lobbying, in which AI's case is made simultaneously in the assembly halls and in the streets, reinforces the action and increases the possibility it will be successful.

Members should be particularly mindful of the danger that some political forces may try to use AI in a partisan way. In all its contacts with political figures, AI should aim for a balance among conflicting parties and ideologies so that the movement is seen to be broad-based and impartial.

*

Visiting Your Political Representative

Forming a good working relationship with local government officials can enhance a group's all-round campaigning.

Here are some basic points to keep in mind when meeting with political figures:

* always remember: coordinate the meeting with the section and with other groups in your area

* keep the AI delegation small -- no more than three people

* bring to the meeting some background material that tells the official what AI is and the activities the local group has been carrying out

* make a specific request. Ask the official to write a letter of appeal, bring forward a human rights issue in the assembly, read a current AI report, or pass the group's concern to a senior government minister

* ask the politician for advice on the most effective way to convey information to him or her. Politicians are in the business of being lobbied, and should be happy to give guidance on how best to gain their attention

* remember to foster good relations with the official's staff, who often wield a great deal of control over a representative's time and agenda

* ask for a follow-up meeting in six months or a year

* send a note of thanks

* report on the meeting to the section coordinator for home government approaches, or if there is no section, to the International Secretariat

*

OUTREACH

Your AI group can join with other organizations to build pressure for the protection of human rights.

Groups can increase support for their campaigning by reaching outward to work with "target sectors" -- professional organizations and other social and cultural groupings.

Some sectors of society are likely to respond positively to AI's call for help. Trade unionists, members of religious communities, teachers, journalists and writers, lawyers, health care workers, politicians, and community activists are often committed to the struggle for social justice. People from these walks of life are themselves often the victims of human rights violations.

In these same sectors, and others, there may be many who have never considered working for human rights or had the opportunity to do so. AI groups can help motivate these people to become activists even if they may not wish to become members of AI itself.

AI's aim is to get all of society committed to working for human rights.

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AI's Allies -- Who Are They?

Agricultural workers
Aid and development organizations
Artists and musicians
Business people
Doctors, nurses, and other health workers
Children's organizations
Community workers
Environmental activists
Ethnic or minority groups
Human rights monitors
Indigenous peoples
Lawyers and other legal professionals
Military personnel
Peace campaigners
Police officers
Political parties
Religious bodies
Scientists
Students and youth
Teachers
Trade unionists
Women's organizations
Writers and journalists

This list is by no means exhaustive -- AI welcomes genuine help from any quarter.

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Why Reach Out?

Outreach is a routine part of all AI action. It can be seen not as a marginal or optional activity, but as a way of thinking about all campaigning. Imaginative outreach magnifies the impact of every effort that a group makes.

Outreach expands the campaigning forces that are mobilized ...

* Activists -- More support

AI can identify large numbers of supporters simply by using the networks these people already belong to. Forming links with existing institutions extends AI's own networks, in effect, and makes it easier to generate greater numbers of appeals.

Outreach gains support for the movement also because it speaks to people in terms that they recognize. Trade unionists, for example, will readily take up the cause of persecuted colleagues.

In the long term, outreach encourages the growth and diversification of AI's own membership, and it creates a wider base of general human rights awareness.

* Political resources -- Influence and prestige

Leading figures in the community can help AI by lending the weight of their official positions or personal standing.

Heads of large trade unions, respected religious leaders, prominent lawyers, and eminent physicians can be valuable in lobbying other powerful forces such as home government authorities.

* Financial resources -- Money

Religious bodies and trade unions, high-income professionals, and artists and musicians all can help AI in raising funds to support its relief efforts and its programs.

* Technical resources -- Professional skills and special services

Trade unions can offer practical help such as the use of a printing facility. Lawyers can give specialist advice. Medical workers can bring their expert perspective to strengthen AI's protests against torture and ill-treatment. Teachers, acting in their professional capacity, can give courses in human rights education.

Coordination of outreach

Whenever AI asks another organization for its support, the approach must be properly coordinated.

As a general rule, any request for support from other bodies is the responsibility of the parallel level of AI.

** AI groups deal with the local, community and regional branches of other organizations

** Section governing bodies, staff, and outreach coordinators make approaches to the national levels of these organizations

** AI's international level deals with the offices of international organizations

To lessen the chance of sending conflicting messages to the target organization, it is good practice for groups also to inform other AI groups in their community of the outreach activities they are planning.

As in all sensitive areas where AI's public image is at stake, groups -- if they have the people available -- might consider appointing members to act as outreach contacts or specialists. These people can take charge of outreach in general, or they can focus on specific sectors where they may already have close links.

Cooperation with other organizations

Even though it is important for AI to involve other bodies in work on shared concerns, the movement must carry out this activity in ways that do not give the community a wrong impression about AI's mandate, or threaten AI's reputation for impartiality and independence.

AI can give EXTERNAL information to other organizations and encourage them to take action. It can also send representatives to speak to other organizations about AI's mandate and work.

In the case of an activity whose concern falls completely within AI's mandate -- such as torture or the death penalty -- the movement may be able to join with other bodies in public campaigning.

If a public event is open to a large number of organizations (such as a parade) AI can take part as one of these identifiable organizations.

AI can work with other bodies also on long-term projects in human rights education that aim to make people aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although the topics that AI deals with must fall within its limited mandate, the issues taught by other organizations may fall outside this mandate.

The first approach

Here are some general tips on making the opening approach to an organization in your community:

- * check first with your own group members -- perhaps a member is already linked with the organization in some manner, and can advise on the best way for the group to make the connection
- * try to find out which member or official in the organization is the best person to contact
- * be clear on your goals. What kind of practical help does the group want from the other organization? Direct appeals? Donations? Lobbying?
- * plan for the long term. Look for ways to involve the organization in an extended working relationship (being mindful, however, of your group's resources and capacity to maintain this relationship)
- * at the first encounter, remember to bring along some basic background information about AI
- * ask the organization to suggest how it can best help stop those human rights abuses that are of concern both to it and to AI
- * before the meeting ends, aim to agree that at least one practical action will be undertaken
- * maintain the dialogue. Arrange for follow-up contact -- a meeting, telephone call, or correspondence

How to Work Together

Here are some of the practical suggestions that an AI group might make to another organization ...

- * issue a formal endorsement of AI's goals that can be used in approaching individual members of your organization
- * give AI permission to publicize widely in the community your organization's support for the movement
- * send appeals to a target government on your official letterhead
- * at your next meeting, propose a formal resolution on behalf of a human rights concern
- * circulate an AI petition among your members and staff
- * make a donation of money to AI's relief program or to support the movement in general
- * contribute a prize for a fund-raising contest
- * sign up to receive Urgent Action appeals and make a commitment to

take action regularly

- * make available the use of equipment or in-house services, such as copying or mailing machines, or photo and film studios
- * invite AI to send a speaker to your meetings or to set up an information table or display
- * send a speaker to address an AI meeting about your organization's human rights policies
- * distribute AI pamphlets to your members by way of your regular mailing to them
- * publish in your newsletter a feature story about AI or reproduce, on a routine basis, the Worldwide Appeals or cases from the Action Bulletin
- * "adopt" a particular AI issue and carry out long-term work
- * lobby home government authorities on an AI concern
- * approach diplomatic representatives of the target government in support of an AI concern
- * make direct appeals to the target government whenever members of your organization are travelling in that country
- * try to activate your counterpart bodies in the target country
- * appoint an in-house human rights committee or a contact person who will work regularly with the AI group and advise it on how best to make its approaches
- * mobilize the professional activities or skills of individuals in your organization -- artists to produce posters, lawyers to draft carefully-worded legal arguments, people of faith to hold religious events, and so on

Special Resources and Opportunities

Specialist Groups

In some sections, people have come together to form AI "specialist groups" of health care workers, lawyers, teachers, artists, journalists, or police and military personnel.

These groups campaign directly on behalf of victims who come from a similar background. They also apply their skills and contacts on behalf of a wide range of victims. They try to inform their colleagues, at home or in the target country, about AI's concerns.

Many of these AI groups function as national coordination groups for the section's outreach to that area. They also focus on making their specialist expertise available to AI community groups and other parts of the movement.

Materials

Regularly, the International Secretariat circulates Medical Actions and Lawyer's Actions that are designed to involve members of those professions in working on a current concern. Many sections re-package and distribute these materials to legal and medical workers. Some sections assemble and circulate similar materials that are appropriate for other outreach areas.

The International Secretariat also indexes action documents (such as Urgent Actions) to highlight opportunities for outreach to specific social groups. As well, outreach suggestions are often made in the context of general campaigning advice.

Annual Outreach Actions

Every year, the movement carries out an International Women's Day Action (8 March) and an International Trade Union Action (1 May).

The International Secretariat distributes case materials and recommends outreach activities. Many sections and groups use these materials (which they sometimes translate or re-package for the benefit of local audiences) to mobilize women's organizations, trade unionists, their own members, and the general public.

Sensitive Approaches

From time to time, AI takes advantage of the international contacts held by military and police establishments, and by business and financial institutions, and it asks these bodies to convey the movement's appeals to authorities abroad.

Because of the risk that the organization's mandate and principles may be misunderstood, it handles outreach to these sectors with care.

Making requests for help from military and police officials, for example, is particularly complex. Unlike other sectors whose members are frequently the victims of human rights violations, it is often the military and police that commit these acts.

Approaches to companies are delicate because there is a risk AI will be seen -- wrongly -- to endorse economic or trade sanctions.

When a group is considering making such approaches, it should consult with the section or, in countries where there is no section, with the International Secretariat.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees every person freedom, justice and equality. One of AI's objectives is to make all people of all ages aware of the basic rights and responsibilities that each possesses, and in the long term, to build a culture of prevention.

When AI talks about "human rights education", it is referring not only to the specific rights that are set out in its mandate, but to the full range of human rights that are set out in the Universal Declaration. Although AI takes action on behalf of a limited number of rights, it is convinced of the importance and of the inter-dependence of all human rights.

Human rights education is an area where AI is actively interested in working in partnership with other bodies. While the materials it distributes and the issues it presents must fall within its own mandate, AI aims to cooperate with other organizations in the long-term promotion of the full range of human rights.

Every activist can foster broad-based awareness of human rights by joining in the publicity, outreach, and lobbying activities that are part of the ongoing work of AI and of many other organizations. Teachers and students, however, are particularly well-placed to help build a "human rights generation".

The steps your group chooses to take in this area will depend on its own resources and on those of other organizations and teaching institutions in your community. Here are some practical ideas:

- * check with your section's outreach coordinator or teachers' coordinator -- many sections are developing human rights education programs and are creating teaching kits and other useful resources
- * contact other human rights bodies in your community, and together develop a strategy for introducing human rights education into the curriculum of local schools and colleges
- * look for support not only from individual teachers and students but also from teachers' unions and from parents' associations
- * send an AI speaker to a school to give a talk or to show a film
- * send to teachers' journals articles about AI and about human rights education
- * set up an AI poster display in a school
- * invite a class to write letters on behalf of Urgent Actions or Worldwide Appeals, or to collect signatures on a petition
- * encourage the creation of an AI group within the student body

* give all students a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and discuss with them what it means

* raise with producers of radio and television educational programs the idea of carrying a series about human rights

* encourage the school theatre group to produce a play with a human rights theme, and suggest human rights topics for school writing and art projects

* hold a "Human Rights Week" in the run-up to Human Rights Day, 10 December

FUND-RAISING

Raising money is an essential part of human rights campaigning. It is vital work that all AI members and groups are expected to carry out.

Why Is Fund-Raising Necessary?

In order for AI to remain independent and impartial, it neither requests nor receives money from governments. The movement must be self-supporting and its fund-raising must be broad-based.

*** Each donation helps pay the practical, day-to-day expenses of the movement -- the costs of research, publications, travel, communication, and relief.

These costs are high. To sustain the life-saving work of the International Secretariat alone, £1.50 must be raised every second.

Similarly, section offices could not function without the money raised by groups, members, and the public to pay for their day-to-day operations, such as producing regular information mailings, distributing press releases, and creating campaigning materials.

Your group itself will need funds to cover the costs of making banners, printing leaflets, and organizing events.

*** Each donation reinforces the credibility of AI's message by affirming the organization's independence from political pressure. Asking for a contribution is one of the best ways to show people that AI is exactly what it says it is -- an independent, voluntary movement relying on public sponsorship.

Guidelines for Fund-raising

Every AI group is required to establish a sound financial basis and to contribute to the support of the movement.

To safeguard AI's independence and impartiality, the funds that groups ask for and accept must in no way incur financial dependence upon any political organization or interest. The funds must not limit AI's freedom of activity and expression, nor influence the concerns that AI chooses to take up.

Every group must observe the following guidelines:

1. AI neither asks for nor accepts direct donations from governments.
2. AI will not accept from any source a donation that carries conditions inconsistent with the movement's principles, or that is earmarked for a particular country or case.

3. Unless permission is given by the section's governing body or by the International Executive Committee, a group may not accept a donation from any single source that amounts to more than 5% of its annual income.

For more details about guidelines on the acceptance of funds, contact your section office or, where there is no section, the International Secretariat.

Where the Money Comes From

Most AI groups assess their members a regular subscription fee or an annual contribution. These charges vary in different parts of the movement, and in some individual instances they may be waived.

Many groups also carry out fund-raising projects or ongoing activities that encourage the general public to donate. The groups organize collections, sales, and entertainments whose main purpose is to raise money for the movement.

Tips for Successful Fund-raising

Groups and members are sometimes reluctant to take part in fund-raising activity, feeling perhaps that it is not "real human rights work", or that it is improper to approach strangers for money.

Here are some practical hints for making fund-raising a routine and enjoyable part of your group's work ...

* Ask for the donation

Don't wait for donors to take the initiative in approaching you. If you want to receive a donation, you must ask for it.

* Stress the need

Show that human rights work -- research missions, relief, routine postage -- is expensive. Obtain from your section or the International Secretariat the most up-to-date figures on "what it costs to run AI" and use it in your publicity material.

* Show that every donation is, in fact, an appeal for human rights

Make it clear to people that each contribution is a way of putting pressure on governments to stop human rights abuses. Every donation, no matter how small, helps to fight injustice in the world.

* Remember: many people will want to give to AI

Contributing to humanitarian organizations makes people feel good. You could even say that you are doing people a favour by offering

them the chance to give to a worthwhile cause.

* Integrate fund-raising into all your activities

Use every fund-raising event to generate appeals, or create publicity, or reach out to the community. Likewise, use every campaigning event to raise some funds.

* Enjoy yourself

Although AI's concerns are serious, to be effective in its work it must carry out its tasks with enthusiasm and energy -- don't be afraid to have fun. AI groups around the world regularly organize dances, comedy evenings, dinners, fairs and bazaars.

* Be persistent

Keep asking for money. People who have supported AI on one occasion will realize that money is always needed. If a particular fund-raising source or project was successful once, try it again.

* Be imaginative

Groups can ask the public for money by any means that does not violate AI's fund-raising guidelines or national laws. The scope for imagination is practically limitless.

Project Ideas

The specific projects that your group will choose to take up will depend on your local culture and community, and on the group's resources and the priorities it has set in its annual plan.

Here are some examples of the fund-raising projects that groups around the world are carrying out successfully:

* a football match where the gate proceeds are handed over to AI

* a popular music performance during which an AI table sells t-shirts, badges, and posters

* a benefit bring-your-own-dish international dinner serving food, prepared by group members, from the cuisine of different countries

* a raffle of a donated prize such as a lavish cake or a travel voucher

* a garden party or outdoor fair combining music, food, games and entertainment

* a community-wide street sale of large numbers of flowers, candles, and AI badges, each of which draws a low price

* a public auction of used items (pens, books, furniture) donated by writers, political figures, and other celebrities, each of which draws a high price

* a straightforward door-to-door collection on behalf of AI

* a sale of local art, donated antiques, or second-hand books

* a event in which the participant is "sponsored" -- to walk, run, fast, dance, ride a bicycle -- in aid of AI

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Always ask for a "silent contribution" -- paper money doesn't make a noise when it drops into the box

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URGENT ACTIONS

AI's Urgent Action scheme aims to rescue people from human rights emergencies.

It is a system of rapid response that is designed to protect people whose life or physical well-being is in danger.

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    Send a Telegram ... Write a Letter ... Save a Life  
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What victims does it try to help?

Urgent Action is taken to save prisoners who are being tortured or who are threatened with torture, who need immediate medical attention, or who face immediate execution.

It is taken at critical stages in trials to save political prisoners from being victims of an unfair hearing.

It is taken to save those people who have "disappeared" or who are being threatened by a "death squad".

It is taken to save those asylum-seekers who are at risk of being forcibly returned to a country where they will likely become victims of the human rights abuses of concern to AI.

How does the system work?

Speed is vital. The scheme depends on swift response by a worldwide network of activists.

AI's International Secretariat, in cooperation with section offices, distributes requests for emergency help to thousands of volunteers around the world.

As soon as they can, these activists send express or airmail letters, telexes, FAX messages or telegrams to the target government.

What information does AI distribute?

Each Urgent Action case sheet is a self-contained campaigning package. All the information you need for sending emergency messages is provided, usually on a single piece of paper.

The case sheet gives details of the individuals who are at risk, background on the situation, points to make in appeals, and the names, titles, addresses, and telex and FAX numbers of target officials.

It highlights the specific human rights concern, for example, "Fear of Torture" or "Death Penalty". It may make mention of the occupation or the personal background of the people at risk.

Often, the case sheet will give a time limit on the action. While you should send appeals as soon as possible after receiving the request, you should not send further appeals after this cut-off date without first checking with your section office (or, where there is no section, with the International Secretariat) for any new information on the case.

Where possible, those Urgent Action network members who received the original request are send updates to keep them informed about developments in cases they had been asked to act upon.

Does the Urgent Action scheme have an impact?

In more than one-third of the cases that are taken up, some improvement has been reported in the situation -- death sentences are commuted, people "reappear", arrests are acknowledged, detainees are released, and seriously ill prisoners are given medical attention.

AI has first-hand evidence of one Urgent Action producing 20,000 appeals over a three-month period, and of three Urgent Actions (on the same country) producing over 30,000 appeals in one week. When thousands of AI supporters send appeals on each Urgent Action request that the movement distributes, it is not surprising that these messages make an impression on target officials.

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A security agent once said to a political prisoner, "You are not dead because too many people are concerned about you."
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How can our group take part in the scheme most effectively?

* if your group has the resources, designate one member to take charge of coordinating its Urgent Action letter-writing. Make it this person's task to develop a local network of people willing to send urgent appeals in response to requests for action

* Urgent Action case sheets are EXTERNAL and AI members are encouraged to distribute them widely. Duplicate and make them available at information stalls or at any public event.

Bear in mind, however, that because the information in Urgent Actions can quickly go out-of-date, the case sheets should not be distributed to the news media in the same manner as news releases.

To give non-AI members some information about the scheme, attach a photocopy of this section of the Amnesty International Handbook

- * often, an Urgent Action will request that appeals be sent by specialist groups such as health workers, lawyers, or trade unionists. Use Urgent Actions to mobilize these sectors in your community

- * an effective way to introduce new members to AI's work is to invite them to do a specific task. The Urgent Action case sheet is a practical and motivating means for taking immediate campaigning action

- * during regular letter-writing evenings, use the case sheets as a resource to train new members in AI's basic approach

- * because Urgent Actions are self-contained packages, they are ideal ways to involve human rights activists who prefer to work as individuals. Distribute them to members who cannot always attend meetings or take part in group activities

- * fashion a large poster out of an Urgent Action case sheet, display it at public events, and enrol new activists in the Urgent Action scheme

- * hold a fund-raising event and set aside the money in the group's budget to cover the cost of sending "quick" electronic appeals by telegram, telex, or FAX

- * the words "Urgent Action" are dramatic. Use them, and samples of the case sheets, in creating interest in AI's work in the local news media

- * invite a non-partisan range of political representatives to participate in the Urgent Action network

How do we join the Urgent Action network?

Contact your section or, where there is no section, the International Secretariat. Groups or individual members can be registered to receive the case sheets.

Members of the network are expected to cover the costs of the letters and telegrams they send. In some parts of the movement, they may be asked to make an additional contribution to help pay the general expenses of maintaining the network.

No single volunteer can be expected to act upon every one of the hundreds of Urgent Action case sheets that AI issues each year. New participants in the network may be asked to specify the level or frequency of activity, and the country, profession, or background of the people on whose behalf they can make the most effective appeals.

REFUGEE PROTECTION

AI opposes the forcible expulsion of refugees or asylum-seekers to countries where they risk being held as prisoners of conscience, "disappearance", torture, or execution.

The movement works to ensure that governments protect asylum-seekers from being returned against their will to a country where they are at risk, or from being sent to a third country where they will not receive such protection.

AI's work for refugees and asylum-seekers is based on international standards, such as the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The granting of protection to those at risk of persecution is not only an act of humanity -- all states have an obligation under international law not to return refugees to countries where they will be at risk of serious human rights violations.

AI's Focus

The movement concentrates on ensuring that:

- * procedures for examining requests for asylum, the procedures followed at airports and borders, are adequate to identify asylum-seekers who are at risk

- * visa requirements and other measures that governments take to control entry are not used in a way that obstructs asylum-seekers in obtaining access to a proper refugee-determination procedure

- * if asylum-seekers or refugees are detained, they are given a prompt, fair, individual hearing before a judicial or similar authority to examine whether their detention is lawful and in accordance with international standards

What AI Can Do to Help Refugees

A large part of AI's efforts on behalf of asylum-seekers and refugees are carried out by sections in the countries where they seek protection.

While AI members must not, in their role as members, campaign on behalf of individual cases of human rights violations that take place within their own country, they can work to prevent violations happening elsewhere. Members can work on behalf of individuals seeking asylum in their own country, and they can lobby their own government for fair refugee laws.

Section-level staff and volunteers can provide:

* information, to back up the case of a person applying for refugee status, about the human rights situation in the country the applicant has fled

* lobbying of one's own government on behalf of a person threatened with being returned to a situation where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations

Local AI groups can support their section's refugee work by:

* lobbying the home government to establish and follow refugee laws and procedures that conform with international standards -- lobbying that must be carefully coordinated with the section

* carrying out human rights education projects that inform the public about the realities of a world where people become refugees, that insist on the need for fair and effective refugee-protection laws and procedures, and that encourage the public to demand that its government treat asylum-seekers humanely and in accordance with international standards for the protection of refugees

In the long term, AI members can best help refugees by campaigning to end the unjust imprisonment, the torture, and the state killings that cause so many people in the world to become refugees.

If your group wishes to help AI's work on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers, contact your section or, in countries where there is no section, the International Secretariat.

Groups in countries without sections should be aware that AI work on behalf of individual refugees can easily become overwhelming. When such groups are approached by asylum-seekers asking for AI's help, they should contact the team responsible for refugee work at the International Secretariat.

WORLDWIDE APPEALS

Every month, the Amnesty International Newsletter highlights the cases of several individual victims of human rights violations.

Many section and group newsletters reprint this information so that hundreds of thousands of people -- worldwide -- are alerted to the plight of these individuals.

For many years, this action form focused on prisoners of conscience and was known as the Campaign for Prisoners of the Month.

The cases featured in Worldwide Appeals are chosen from the thousands of individual victims known to AI because it is felt that they will benefit from concentrated letter-writing and publicity.

The case may have been a frustrating one for AI groups that may have worked on it, and mass appeals may bring a response from the government. The person may be a prisoner who needs medical care. The individual may be one of a special group of detainees whose situation needs to be publicized.

In order to reflect the impartiality of AI's work, the cases are selected from a range of world regions and ideological backgrounds.

Each entry summarizes the case history. Often, a photograph of the individual is included.

The entry gives the name, title, and address of a senior official in the target government, and sets out the specific demand that AI is making in each case.

Updated information on the cases is printed in the Amnesty International Newsletter as soon as it becomes available.

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All AI members must observe the rules about working on human rights violations in their own country.

Members must not take action on Worldwide Appeals that concern victims of human rights violations in their own country.

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What Groups Can Do

The Worldwide Appeals are a primary source of case information. Developing groups can use them to build a basic program of regular letter-writing, publicity, and outreach. Experienced groups can use them to introduce new members to AI's work in a gradual way.

Here are some suggestions for campaigning on the basis of the Worldwide

Appeals in your local community:

- * for each case, send not only letters of appeal, but also telegrams, and petitions containing mass signatures
- * ask your local newspaper, radio or television station to agree to publicize the Worldwide Appeals in a regular column or program
- * encourage your local political representative to subscribe to the Amnesty International Newsletter and to send appeals on his or her official letterhead
- * watch for cases of people from specific professions or social groups, such as health care workers, trade unionists, or young people, and use the information in your group's outreach to these sectors of the community
- * photocopy the case information and distribute it during your group's public events
- * make the information available to members who may not be in a position to come to meetings or to take part in the group's activities
- * ask a non-AI body -- a trade union branch, a religious community, an office -- to "sponsor" your group's Worldwide Appeals by paying for the stationery and the postage
- * use the "success stories" that appear in updates to demonstrate, through newsletters and displays, that human rights work does have a positive impact and to ask for donations to ensure that this work will continue.

The Action Bulletin aaa

This four-page publication is distributed quarterly by the International Secretariat to individual "international members" and to groups in countries without sections.

It highlights a "good news" story and two cases of human rights abuses relating to a particular theme -- such as the death penalty, or human rights abuses inflicted upon youth or indigenous people -- and it gives action suggestions.

Like the Worldwide Appeals, this publication provides individual members and groups with a basic package of information to support a regular program of campaigning for human rights.

The Action Bulletin is designed specifically to encourage growth in AI support around the world. Members and groups can use it to build membership in parts of the world where the movement's campaigning presence is small. aaa

COUNTRY / THEME / AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Periodically, many AI groups around the world join forces to address a specific human rights concern by means of actions lasting from approximately two months to a year or more.

While the term "campaigning" applies generally to all AI activities, these large-scale, focused projects are known within AI by the term "campaigns".

Campaigns are designed to bring intense pressure from many quarters and to make an especially powerful impact on the target government. They can be used also to spread public awareness about human rights issues, and to show solidarity with human rights workers around the world.

AI's experience suggests that massive global campaigns do help to bring about positive change.

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Listen to Vladimir Bukovsky, once a prisoner of conscience in the Soviet Union: " ... when the campaign of protest increased ... the treatment would always improve ... [The officials] were always at pains to show how little regard they have for international public opinion ... but in fact they are very sensitive to it, much more than people realize."

From Vietnam, a released prisoner writes: "We could always tell when international protests were taking place .. the food rations increased and the beatings were fewer .. but when the letters stopped, the dirty food and the repression started again."

A former torturer in El Salvador has said: "If there's lots of pressure, like from Amnesty International, we might pass them [the political prisoners] on to a judge. But if there's no pressure, then they're dead."

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Campaign Goals

Over the years, AI has mounted several types of campaigns:

Country campaigns attempt to deal with patterns of serious human rights abuses in one country

* a massive letter-writing effort, in 1986, to thousands of people in **South Africa** alerted them to AI's concerns about widespread political detention, torture, and executions

* a short but intense campaign in early June 1990 reminded the world about the repression of political activists that had been taking

place in **China** since a year earlier

* a 1987 campaign mobilized the world movement to protest against executions in the **United States**

Theme campaigns confront a longstanding, global pattern of violations

* in the mid-1980s, a two-year campaign publicized torture and ill-treatment as reported in over half the countries of the world

* an extensive 1989 campaign condemned the use of the death penalty in dozens of countries and set out a program for worldwide abolition

Awareness campaigns attempt to educate the public about human rights in general or about the work of AI

* the 1988 Human Rights Now! campaign used popular music to help promote knowledge and observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on its 40th anniversary

* the movement's 30th anniversary campaign, in 1991, stressed the urgency of AI's concerns and its outrage that many of them had still not been addressed

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Death Penalty Actions

About 1000 groups around the world take part in Death Penalty Actions.

These short-term actions involve appeals to a target government to abolish the death penalty in law, or not to reintroduce it where it has been abolished. They may also involve campaigning on a specific issue in one country, such as the execution of juvenile offenders.

These actions are coordinated by death penalty coordinators in sections.

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Campaign Materials

Depending on the nature and scope of the campaign, the International Secretariat will produce different kinds of supporting materials.

It may distribute to sections INTERNAL circulars bearing general background information, an outline of the international strategy, recommended actions based on this strategy, outreach suggestions, case descriptions, and address lists of government authorities.

Sometimes it will produce EXTERNAL research reports, illustrated briefings, press releases, videos, and photographs. Occasionally, it will draft formal statements for public endorsement.

Sections taking part in the effort will often adapt these materials for their own groups and members. They may translate key documents, publish articles in section bulletins, and sometimes design and produce their own leaflets, posters, photo displays, printed petitions, and fund-raising appeals.

If they have the means, groups will create a similar array of campaigning materials -- public displays, postcard appeals, leaflets, and so on.

Campaign Coordination

The large campaigns described here are coordinated by the International Secretariat's Campaigning Unit, working closely with the Research Department.

In sections, these projects are normally managed by the campaign coordinator, or, in the case of a country campaign, by the campaign coordinator in cooperation with the coordinator for that country.

A group that chooses to take part will usually designate a member, or a small team, to act as coordinator for the duration of the project.

Organizing for Action

During a worldwide AI campaign, a local group may be encouraged to undertake the full range of techniques, such as:

- * sending direct appeals to a list of government authorities, journalists, and professionals in the target country
- * publicizing locally the press release, plus distributing the research report or briefing
- * involving the group's local government representatives
- * reaching out to sectors in the community that may have a special interest in the concern
- * staging attention-getting events, such as a demonstration at the target country's embassy
- * raising money, either to cover the extra costs incurred by the increased activity, or as a fundamental goal of the campaign

A large-scale campaign is a good opportunity for a group to draw upon its complete inventory of skills, interests, and contacts, and to

create an integrated array of such techniques.

It is also an ideal chance to use the experience it has gained in other projects, such as RAN work or Action Files, that concern the same target country or the same human rights theme.

Advice that will help groups take advantage of each of these approaches to campaigning is presented in the Amnesty International Handbook.

In particular, groups that decide to join any campaign should plan carefully the level of their involvement. They should adapt the campaign goals and tasks to their own resources and those of the community, and set their own goals and tasks.

For practical suggestions on how to set up and carry out a large project such as a major campaign, see the handbook's section on project planning.

Annual Actions

Weeks Leading to International Women's Day, 8 March

Weeks Leading to International Labour Day, 1 May

Amnesty International Week, usually in October

Weeks Leading to Human Rights Day, 10 December

AI groups can always count on these four opportunities to do local campaigning.

For many of these occasions, the International Secretariat distributes supporting materials -- individual case information, or a press release -- and sometimes gives recommended actions.

Regardless of the resources that are made available, every group can plan to carry out a program of local campaigning on or around some or all of these dates. It can circle them in its program calendar, and use the actions to build long-term links in the community.

* ask local municipal authorities to observe "Amnesty International Week" and to fly an AI banner at city hall

* approach women's organizations and trade unionists as early as January, and get their cooperation in sending both high-level and mass appeals

* likewise, in October, get in touch with other human rights bodies in your community, and plan to hold a march highlighting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on its anniversary, Human Rights Day

Limited Actions

For strategic reasons, the International Secretariat occasionally approaches specific parts of the movement and asks them to campaign on current issues for a short time.

A Group-Level Action, for example, mobilizes at short notice groups that are already committed to long-term work on a target country, such as by way of an Action File.

Similarly, a Section-Level Action mobilizes those sections that may have unique resources or that likely can make a special impact on the target country.

ACTION FILES

AI's fight for human rights began, in the 1960s, by asking local groups to work to obtain the release of individual prisoners of conscience.

This "dossier" or "case sheet" approach -- in which small circles of volunteers work together in campaigning on behalf of individual prisoners -- proved a highly motivating way to draw upon the energy and creativity of human rights activists.

The central idea is this: a group of members dedicates itself to freeing an individual prisoner through an intense and ongoing program of campaigning -- a program that normally does not stop until the prisoner is set free.

Over the years, AI has identified other long-term tasks that groups can carry out effectively. It has used the basic model to develop new forms of dossiers.

All these forms are now known as Action Files.

While Action Files differ in their goals and in their approach, all demand a long-term commitment by a group (often working with a small network of other groups around the world) to achieve a specific task that it has been assigned. Most of the time, this task will focus on helping an individual.

Here are some examples of areas of activity that might be taken up by an Action File:

◆ Adoption of Prisoners of Conscience

Your group "adopts" a prisoner of conscience and campaigns for his or her immediate and unconditional release.

◆ Investigation and "Disappearance" Cases

Your group makes enquiries of a government to try to find out whether a detainee is a prisoner of conscience, to ask when a political prisoner will receive a fair and prompt trial, or to demand to know the whereabouts of a "disappeared" person.

◆ Themes and Issues

Your group campaigns to end the use of the death penalty in a particular country or a state within a country, to put a stop to extrajudicial executions, to highlight deaths in custody, or to publicize deaths as a result of torture.

Materials in action files

When your group is assigned an Action File, you will receive from the International Secretariat, or by way of your section office, a file or dossier of background information, instructions, and advice.

This important package may contain ...

- * a case sheet giving personal details about the prisoner or other individual (or group of individuals) who is of concern to AI, and basic facts about the case

- * general advice on security, coordination, reporting, and action

- * specific case instructions that should be observed closely, particularly if they prohibit or limit any of the suggestions made in the general advice or in the Amnesty International Handbook

- * lists of government authorities in the target country

- * confidential or sensitive information, such as the address of relatives of detainees, or names of AI contacts in the target country. This information is strictly INTERNAL and is not for publication or circulation outside your group

- * information to allow your group to communicate and exchange ideas with AI groups in other countries that share the Action File

- * background on the target country's political situation or security laws that may relate to the project

Level of Activity

Action Files carry special responsibilities for your group.

Most Action Files are assigned to a relatively small number of groups. It is even possible that yours is the only group in the entire movement working on behalf of the victims of human rights violations who are featured in the Action File.

Your group has a responsibility, therefore, to maintain a reasonable and consistent level of campaigning activity on each Action File assigned to it.

To achieve this level of activity, your group should plan to make work on its Action File its first priority, and if necessary to carry out less work in other areas.

If your group is not able to main such a level of activity, it may be asked to relinquish the Action File so that it can be re-assigned.

Security of Information

Your group should also take particular care to handle Action File information with caution and discretion. Failure to do so may put at risk the very people you are trying to safeguard.

Observe the general guidelines on security that are given in the Amnesty International Handbook, and follow any special instructions that are contained in the dossier.

Coordination

When your group agrees to take long-term responsibility for an Action File, you will find that you often receive messages directly from the International Secretariat, especially from the relevant research team. Please bear in mind that the Research Department deals with thousands of local groups around the world, and observe the following important points about coordination:

- * when your group needs a question answered, or advice on action, contact your section's coordinator (or co-group) for the target country, or your section office. If there is no coordinator, co-group, or section office, write to the relevant research team at the International Secretariat. To help the research team save time, clearly indicate in your letter the name of your prisoner or individual of concern, and your group's number

- * under normal circumstances, there is seldom need for your group to write to the Research Department to ask if there have been developments in a case. The research team will always inform groups automatically if new information has been obtained

- * your group should ensure that its mailing address is as permanent as possible, and that any change is reported immediately to your section and the International Secretariat

From time to time, your group will be asked to give a detailed account of its activities on each Action File. **These reports are a vital part of effective campaigning.** They can help AI to measure the level of pressure being directed at a target government, to assess its impact, and to suggest other activities or new approaches.

In addition to the regular reports, your group is expected to inform the relevant research team at the International Secretariat (and coordinators, and the section office) immediately of any developments in your case. In particular you should forward to these bodies copies of any official replies to your appeals you may have received.

Techniques for Long-term Campaigning

Occasionally, an Action File will specify limits to your group's activity on that case. The dossier may suggest, for example, that

mass appeals may not be appropriate action on behalf of a particular adoption case, or, it might discourage the use of publicity during an investigation.

Normally, however, groups with an Action File should aim to use all the campaigning techniques described in the Amnesty International Handbook as far as their resources permit.

Your group should develop a strategy to mobilize the opportunities in your own community -- letter-writers, the media, local officials, professionals and other influential groups, attention-getting events, and fund-raising -- to bring relentless pressure on the target government and to achieve your assigned task completely.

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Outreach Tip

For each Action File your group has been assigned, prepare an information sheet summarizing the concern and providing easy-to-use letter-writing instructions.

Remember to include the name of a contact person, and mention your group's regular meeting time and place.

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REGIONAL ACTION NETWORKS - RANs

What is a RAN?

A Regional Action Network, or "RAN", is a global network of AI groups that campaign on AI's concerns in one region of the world.

AI groups that join a RAN take active measures to build expertise about human rights issues in this world region, and at the same time stand ready to respond to human rights emergencies that arise there. The RAN system assures prompt and expert AI action.

A group that enrolls in, for example, WERAN, the Western Europe Regional Action Network, joins forces with several dozen other AI groups in many parts of the world that campaign against human rights violations taking place in Western European countries.

What kinds of human rights violations do RANs address?

RANs are designed to make it possible for groups to act against abuses of human rights that are difficult to deal with by other AI methods.

Any AI concern can be addressed by a RAN. The most common, however, include pre-trial detention, short-term banishment, impending floggings or executions, large-scale arrests, and "disappearances", as well as some longer-term issues such as prison conditions or legislation.

Because the pattern of human rights violations varies from region to region, each RAN has its own characteristics and demands a unique response on the part of the group. Your group should ask your section office or, where there is no section, the International Secretariat, for details about any RAN you are considering joining.

Why are RANs an effective approach to campaigning?

Groups in a RAN can make an impact because they act expertly and promptly.

* RAN groups work at becoming specialists

They brief themselves about human rights in the world region they focus on. The knowledge they build allows group members to write informed, detailed and careful letters, and to tackle matters that cannot be left to more straightforward, mass appeals.

* RAN groups act rapidly

When requests for action are made by the International Secretariat, RAN groups are expected to respond as quickly as they can.

It may be said that RANs have borrowed aspects of both long-term projects such as Action Files and of short-term emergency responses such as Urgent Actions.

What is a "RAN action"?

A RAN action is a specific campaigning project that RAN groups are asked to carry out.

Each RAN action normally lasts from one to three months. During a group's long-term participation in the network, it may be asked to carry out many such actions. The time-span of each action depends on such factors as the complexity of the situation, the scope for activity, and the level of available information.

Since they are generally issued in response to current and changing developments, the flow of RAN actions can be irregular. In most RANs, however, from eight to ten actions a year will be issued. A group can also expect to receive updates and follow-up actions.

Unlike Urgent Actions, RAN actions are not presented in a standard format. Some complex requests may run as long as twenty pages, but most are one or two pages in length.

What techniques are recommended in a RAN action?

Each action will give a list of recommended activities, such as direct appeals, publicity, or outreach, that should be the starting point for the group's planning. It is up to the group to decide how best to carry out these activities in the context of its resources and its community.

When the concern is an urgent one, most often the specific activity requested will be the careful writing of expert letters.

Sometimes, an action will suggest approaches to the media, or outreach to community sectors or to home government authorities. Since many actions last for only a matter of weeks, it is useful to establish friendly contacts with a body of people in these areas who are prepared to help at short notice.

What can a RAN group do to build its expertise?

Between RAN actions, each RAN group has the opportunity to study the region in detail and to compile a body of knowledge and of influential contacts in the local community.

AI provides background information, including copies of past RAN actions, and AI reports and external papers on countries in the area.

RAN groups can supplement this material by reading press reports about

the region, scanning specialist magazines, and inviting scholars and other experts on the area to speak to the group.

How are RANs coordinated?

Many sections have appointed a coordinator for each RAN in which they are involved. This person receives action requests from the International Secretariat and circulates them, as quickly as possible, to the RAN groups in that section.

Occasionally, the coordinator will add to the action request any advice or information that may help with local campaigning.

The International Secretariat may sometimes decide not to involve every group in the RAN in a particular action. This may happen because mass pressure on the target country is not wanted, or because of concern that groups in the RANs may become overloaded with many actions. The coordinator then will select some of the section's RAN groups to act on the request, and will send it to others for their information only.

RAN groups in countries without a section are serviced by the International Secretariat.

Each group in a RAN should designate a person (or, if it has the resources, a small team) to act as local contact for RAN work and to see that the group reports regularly on its actions.

Points to remember when doing RAN work ...

* do not present the RAN -- inside or outside AI -- in a way that may give the false impression that AI is biased against specific governments or political systems

Always make it clear that your group's campaigning in one world region is balanced by the work of other groups aimed at other regions, and by your own group's other activities.

AI's RAN system covers every country in the world, and no country's human rights problems are "forgotten" or ignored.

The fact that some RANs cover fewer countries than others does not mean that there are more human rights violations in those countries -- the division is purely administrative.

* RAN actions contain many different kinds of information. Observe carefully the distinctions between material for action and material for information only, and between INTERNAL and EXTERNAL materials

* remember that RAN actions require immediate response but also that they often carry time limits that should be respected. RAN actions should not be treated as long-term cases

RELIEF

In some cases, AI groups, sections, or the International Secretariat can send money or goods to victims of human rights violations and to their families.

The decision to give relief is made on a case-by-case basis. Here are some of the people to whom assistance may be given:

- * current and former prisoners of conscience and their dependants
- * victims of torture receiving medical treatment to deal with the effects of the abuse, and their dependants
- * families of people who have "disappeared" or been killed by "death squads", if the victims would have been prisoners of conscience had they simply been imprisoned
- * people at risk of extrajudicial execution, to help them leave the country
- * refugees who risk being returned to a situation of danger

Relief assistance is intended to give these people material and moral support in dealing with the immediate problems resulting from the abuses they have suffered. The funds are not meant to compensate them for a loss of income, for the human rights violations they have suffered, or to sustain their standard of living in the long term.

Requests for relief are considered on a case-by-case basis. Here are some of the needs that AI's relief has met ...

- * rent for the family whose breadwinner is in prison
- * children's school fees
- * fares for family members to visit a detainee
- * medicine, or supplements to an inadequate prison diet
- * basic needs such as clothes and blankets, or small items such as toiletries or writing materials
- * legal aid to secure the release of a prisoner of conscience
- * readjustment of a released prisoner to life in the community
- * medical and psychiatric treatment for a victim of torture.

Coordination

It is not always possible or advisable to send relief to people who appear to be in need of it. In some cases, for example, it can put people at risk if they receive money or goods from abroad.

Under no circumstances should your group undertake any relief operations other than those explicitly recommended by the International Secretariat.

When relief is given, the money can come from fund-raising activities by your group, or from relief funds held at the International Secretariat or at your section.

If your group is encouraged to send money or a gift, you can do so either directly to the recipients, or if this is not advisable, by some other means recommended by the International Secretariat.

The relevant research team at the International Secretariat will ask for a regular report on relief distributed by your group.

If you have more specific questions about relief policy and procedures, contact the relief officer in your section or, if there is no section, the relevant research team at the International Secretariat.

Security

All details on the sending of relief are strictly confidential and are for use within AI only.

Government authorities frequently disapprove of efforts to send money and materials to individuals. Your group should never publicize the recipients of relief, the amounts sent to them or the channels used, or disclose this information to anyone who is not directly involved.

In exceptional instances, an AI group or section may publicize some information about a "good news" relief story for the purpose of increasing awareness of the relief program or of supporting fund-raising projects for relief. The International Secretariat must be consulted in all such instances.

Chapter 6

AI Structure and Organization

Toward the 21st Century

This chapter briefly reviews AI's history. It describes the organization's decision-making structure. It presents AI's vision of its future and of its long-term plan for achieving this vision.

AI Structure and Organization

Toward the 21st Century

Origin

AI was founded by British lawyer Peter Benenson.

He became angry after reading a newspaper report about two Portuguese students. They had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. Their crime: raising their glasses in a toast to freedom.

Benenson began to think of ways to persuade the Portuguese government -- and other oppressive governments -- to release such victims of injustice. His idea was to bombard the authorities with letters of protest.

To draw public attention to the fate of political prisoners, Benenson and several other activists launched a one-year campaign. They called it "Appeal for Amnesty, 1961".

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"What so devastatingly shocked me about the imprisonment of those two now-legendary Portuguese students was that the offence they committed was to utter the one word 'freedom'. So far as I was concerned, freedom was what Amnesty International was going to be about," said Peter Benenson in 1991, on the 30th anniversary of AI.

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The campaign was launched in a newspaper article printed internationally on 28 May 1961. "The Forgotten Prisoners" called on people everywhere to protest -- impartially and peacefully -- the imprisonment of men and women around the world for their political and religious beliefs.

These detainees were to be called "prisoners of conscience". With that, a new phrase entered the vocabulary of world affairs.

The article received a tremendous response. Within a month, more than a thousand readers had sent letters of support and offers of practical help. They also sent details of the cases of many more prisoners of conscience.

Here was to be the driving force behind AI -- popular action by many "ordinary" people worldwide.

As a result of the support it received, six months after the publication of the article Benenson announced another step in the campaign. What had started as a brief publicity effort was being converted into a permanent international movement. AI had begun.

Creativity and Growth

Within a year, the new organization had sent delegations to four countries to make representations on behalf of prisoners, and had taken up 210 cases. Interest and enthusiasm were at such a level that members had organized national bodies in seven countries.

Gradually, AI expanded its mandate. While continuing to work for the release of prisoners of conscience, it began to campaign for fair trials in political cases and against the torture and ill-treatment of all prisoners. In the 1970s, AI took a formal position opposing the death penalty in all cases, and it extended the application of this stand to include unlawful executions and "disappearances".

In 1977, the movement's efforts were recognized by the world community when AI was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1978, it was honoured with the United Nation's Human Rights Prize.

AI broadened its focus and gave its attention to the protection of people who might suffer as a result of activities taking place between governments. It worked to safeguard those seeking refuge in one country from an oppressive government in another country, and it opposed the international transfer of equipment or expertise that might lead to human rights violations.

As its mandate evolved, the vigour and imagination of its members created new ways to bring pressure to bear on behalf of the movement's concerns. They built on the success of AI's primary tactic -- mass letter-writing demanding the release of adopted prisoners -- and developed an array of flexible action forms. These ranged from urgent appeals to stop torture and executions, to broad-based campaigns to confront patterns of abuse.

The movement carried out a worldwide effort -- the 1988 Human Rights Now! campaign -- aimed at promoting awareness and observance of international human rights standards.

In 1991, basing its position on the norms of humanitarian law, the movement decided that it would directly address political opposition groups that commit abuses such as hostage taking or deliberate and arbitrary killings. And it expanded its focus in other ways, giving its attention to such issues as the forcible exile of people from their own country.

AI Today

In the 1990s, AI is a global presence.

Well over a million members, subscribers and regular donors support the movement's work in 150 countries and territories. Tens of thousands of these people take part in AI's Urgent Action network. More than

6000 local AI groups are active around the world. AI has formed sections in dozens of countries.

Each year, the movement sends countless appeals on behalf of thousands of individual victims of human rights violations. It sends scores of delegations on missions to gather research information, observe trials, or meet with government officials. It makes representations each year to the inter-governmental organizations where it has established formal relations.

Since AI accepts no government money, it mounts large public fund-raising efforts to raise the massive funds that are needed to finance its research and campaigning programs.

How AI Governs Itself

AI is constantly struggling to meet two opposing challenges.

On the one hand, AI is driven by the vigour and imagination of its hundreds of thousands of members who live in many different cultures. If their campaigning is to be effective, these members must be free to draw as fully as possible on their own rich stores of energy, creativity, and local resources -- they must speak in "many voices".

On the other hand, the impact that these members will make depends on the consistency and credibility of the message they deliver. If their campaigning is to be effective, these members must observe AI's working principles, coordinate their words and actions, and assure the security of the information they handle -- they must deliver "one message".

AI responds to this challenge by being participatory. Just as the bulk of its work is carried out by volunteer activists, so too are the movement's fundamental policies set by the same activists. This happens through AI's governing body, the International Council.

The International Council

The International Council is a gathering of representatives of all sections. It alone has authority to amend the movement's Statute.

The Council meets every two years, on each occasion in a different city on the invitation of one of the movement's sections. The International Council Meeting involves hundreds of people and lasts for a week or more.

Because it determines AI's mandate and policy, and endorses a plan that sets new priorities for the coming years, each International Council Meeting is a pivotal event in the history of the movement.

In working parties and in plenary assemblies, the International Council debates and makes decisions on resolutions concerning

strategy, action, organization, and finance. It receives the accounts and approves the budget, and agrees on the annual financial contributions to be made by each section. It reviews the work of the outgoing International Executive Committee, and it elects eight of the nine members of the incoming International Executive Committee.

International Executive Committee

During the period between meetings of the International Council, its decisions are carried out by the International Executive Committee. At the same time, this body takes overall responsibility for the conduct of AI's affairs.

The International Executive Committee comprises nine members, eight of whom are elected by the International Council. The staff at the International Secretariat elect one member from among themselves.

This board provides guidance to the International Secretariat, monitors the activities of the membership, and generally ensures that AI's mandate, policies, values and principles are respected and followed.

The Committee meets several times a year. The minutes of its meetings are circulated to all sections.

The International Executive Committee is assisted by permanent standing committees. These committees study, advise and decide on certain issues relating to:

- * the mandate, ranging from the interpretation of borderline cases to overall mandate review
- * program activities, including campaigning strategy, public information programs, and evaluation of techniques and actions
- * organization, including section establishment and growth, and fund-raising
- * finance, including auditing and financial control

*

Special Committees

From time, to time, temporary committees are appointed by the International Council or by the International Executive Committee to tackle specific issues.

These ad hoc committees are often key opportunities for broad participation by the membership in the movement's decision-making.

A Mandate Review Committee, for example, conducted an extensive

three-year consultation with the movement that led to important decisions about the mandate at the 1991 International Council Meeting.

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Secretary General

The International Executive Committee appoints the Secretary General. Under its direction, this person is responsible for the day-to-day conduct of the international affairs of the movement.

The Secretary General serves as a primary spokesperson for AI's worldwide membership, representing the movement to governments, international organizations, the news media, and the general public. The Secretary General serves also as the head of the International Secretariat.

International Secretariat

The International Secretariat provides professional expertise and support to the movement. It guides the organization's day-to-day work but is not authorized to make fundamental policy decisions.

The London office employs about 300 paid staff, as well as many volunteers who work on a regular basis. These people come from dozens of countries. Many have been active with AI as volunteers in groups or in sections. Some have themselves been victims of human rights violations.

Reporting to the Secretary General's Office are departments, units, and divisions that ...

- * carry out research
- * advise about international law
- * organize approaches to inter-governmental organizations
- * develop strategies and materials for casework, campaigns and actions
- * write publications and generate worldwide publicity
- * support section and group development, and member training
- * maintain documentation and information systems
- * provide administrative services to the International Council, the International Executive Committee, and the International Secretariat itself

Through the office of the Secretary General, the staff are collectively responsible to the International Executive Committee. In view of the key role of the International Secretariat in the movement as a whole, however, one member of the International Executive Committee is elected directly to that body to represent the staff.

Some of the functions of the International Secretariat are being decentralized to offices outside London. AI maintains permanent representation at the United Nations in New York and in Geneva, and at the European Communities in Brussels, as well as translation units in Paris and in Madrid and an Asian distribution service in Hong Kong. AI will likely establish other such bases as it expands its presence in different parts of the world.

From time to time, the International Secretariat delegates specific tasks to sections. Among these have been responsibility for outreach on human rights issues relating to abuses against women and for the revision of the international handbook.

Sections

Sections are coordinating bodies established by members and groups active within a single country.

National coordinating structures can be formally recognized as sections once they have demonstrated to the International Executive Committee that they have the capacity to administer, support, and develop AI campaigning throughout the country or territory.

All sections must have an executive committee or national board that represents the membership of the section and that meets regularly. The board, either directly or through a permanent office, helps the membership organize into networks, supports and improves group work, plans campaigns, develops contacts with the news media, lobbies the home government, holds national public events, raises funds, and reaches out to professional associations and other bodies.

Different sections respond to the local needs of their members by setting up different kinds of networks, groups or structures. Many sections have chosen to give considerable autonomy to regional membership structures within their own country or territory.

Annually, each section must report on its activities to the International Executive Committee, and must make a financial contribution to the international movement that is determined by the International Council.

All sections take part in the movement's decision-making in a variety of ways:

- * they send representatives to the International Council Meeting (the exact number is determined by the number of groups or members in the section)

* they contribute to the regular reviews of country, campaigning, and development strategies, and public information policies

* they are consulted formally and informally on important issues as they arise

Many sections maintain an office with a professional staff that, like the staff at the International Secretariat, is often drawn from the volunteer sectors of the movement.

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Section Development --- Section Cooperation

All AI sections, regardless of size, wealth, or status, should see themselves as "developing".

This means, for example, that members are always learning more effective ways of doing AI work, always recruiting new members, and always adapting their work to changing circumstances.

The movement has set up a system to make it easier for sections to cooperate for their mutual benefit. The short-term assistance to areas of need is designed to enhance the long-term self-sufficiency of the whole movement.

Sections and "pre-section" coordinating structures can apply, through the clearinghouse of the Section Development Committee, for project grants, program funding and other financial transfers.

The program is administered with the help of the International Secretariat's Membership Unit.

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Groups

The initiative for forming an AI group usually comes from a core of interested individuals who live or work near one another. When these people have decided they wish to be recognized as a group, they apply to the section or, in countries without a section, to the International Secretariat.

Such a "group-in-formation" is trained by the section or by the International Secretariat. Sometimes, experienced members visit the group, or the group members attend training seminars that teach the basics of AI campaigning: media and home government approaches, outreach, public events, and fund-raising. During this period, such a group will often carry out a minimum level of direct campaigning, and will focus on Urgent Action cases, Worldwide Appeals, or, in some countries, Action Bulletin cases.

When the group has shown that it is able to carry out effective and consistent activity -- in particular, to take responsibility for long-term tasks -- the section recommends that the group be accredited with the International Secretariat. In some sections, specific categories of groups (such as letter-writing circles or student clusters) are registered with the section rather than accredited with the International Secretariat.

To operate efficiently, every AI group should have at least five active members. It should assign responsibility for key tasks to individual members. And it should maintain a reliable mailing address.

Every group is expected to report regularly on its activity, to train new members, and to contribute to the financial support of the movement.

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Provided it observes the AI Statute and the fundamental principles of the movement as set out in this handbook, every group is free to organize itself in whatever way it thinks most effective for its work
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Groups take part in the movement's decision-making by answering requests for consultation on organizational and mandate issues. Groups also take part in setting their section's budget and priorities, and in electing its governing body.

Looking Forward -- The Next Steps

AI has adopted a long-term strategic vision of its work, a sense of what it would like the organization to have achieved at the beginning of the 21st century.

AI's broad objective is to heighten its capacity for effective intervention to stop human rights violations.

To reach this goal, the movement has decided it will mobilize for DYNAMIC ACTION, establish a UNIVERSAL PRESENCE, and create an EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION.

DYNAMIC ACTION

... to stop and to prevent violations of human rights

During the 1990s, AI will increase the resources it applies to research so that it can investigate human rights abuses in those areas of the world, or human rights themes, that currently do not receive the level of attention they should. At the same time, it will increase its campaigning resources so that when it learns of a crisis in human rights, it can respond more urgently and forcefully.

In membership campaigning, AI will encourage new and creative approaches, particularly at the local level. It will support the use of campaigning tactics that can be taken up by anybody -- regardless of the activist's country, culture, or class.

A UNIVERSAL PRESENCE

... in all parts of the world, among people from all walks of life

AI will encourage further membership growth in areas outside Western Europe and North America. It will concentrate especially on human rights education projects among young people in developing countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

As part of a more general focus on human rights promotion, AI at all levels will reach out to forge stronger links with other human rights organizations and networks.

In line with its principle of "one movement, one message, many voices", AI will translate more information into a wider range of languages. To help counter the "London-based" description of the movement in international news media, it will launch regional media initiatives throughout the world and encourage sections and groups to develop a higher profile in their local media.

AN EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION

... so that AI's resources are used to the best effect

All parts of AI will learn to work more effectively through better planning. The movement will try to set realistic goals and priorities that are based on the most efficient use of its limited resources. It will evaluate the work it has done and try to learn from it.

As an organization whose core activity is receiving and distributing information, AI will continue to install modern information technologies until by the year 2000 it is at the forefront in this area.

Finally, AI will establish a new framework for participatory decision-making, and will create structures that support democracy, accountability, and efficiency at all levels of the movement.

Appendix 1

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly
resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948**

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one

another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely

arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the

protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare of a democratic society.

3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Parties about the measures they have taken to implement the convention and hears complaints from individuals who claim they have been tortured in their country.

* United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

This document lays down 95 provisions covering fundamental requirements for the proper treatment of prisoners. It is the basis for much of AI's preventive work in the area of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners.

The rules cover such issues as the availability of medical services, regulations for discipline and punishment, the use of restraining implements, and complaints procedures that are open to prisoners.

* United Nations Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment

The General Assembly adopted by consensus this wide-ranging set of 39 principles which contain detailed, practical safeguards to protect all detainees from the moment of arrest.

* Geneva Conventions

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols of 1977 are aimed at protecting the victims of war and armed conflict. They include prohibitions against the killing and torture of protected persons and they set forth guarantees for humane treatment and fair trial.

* Instruments for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers

The United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its protocol, and the United Nations Declaration on Territorial Asylum provide that no person shall be forcibly returned to a state where he or she is in danger of persecution.

* Codes of ethics for professionals

Various codes of conduct for law enforcement officials and for medical professionals provide rules on how these professions should act in order to prevent human rights violations, and what they should do when faced with violations of the rights of prisoners

United Nations Monitoring Bodies

Africa:

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) comprises nearly all the states of continental Africa and the islands surrounding Africa. Its human rights framework is based on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Implementation of the African Charter is supervised by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. Its 11 members are elected by the governments of OAU member states.

The charter provides for protection of basic rights including those within the mandate of AI.

Americas:

The Organization of American States (OAS) comprises governments of Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America. The legally binding document for the protection of human rights, including those within AI's mandate, is the American Convention on Human Rights.

Compliance is monitored by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The seven members of the commission are elected by member governments to serve in their personal capacity. The commission has a procedure for the examination of communications submitted to it, but its findings are not binding upon any government.

Governments and the commission can submit cases concerning alleged violations of human rights to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights which rules on matters relating to the interpretation or application of the American Convention. Few states have accepted the jurisdiction of the court which therefore has been limited largely to an advisory role.

Europe:

The Council of Europe is composed of 25 states in Western and Eastern Europe. It has adopted several human rights instruments, among them the European Convention on Human Rights. This instrument protects basic rights including those within the mandate of AI.

This convention includes elaborate implementation procedures. Under its terms a Commission and Court of Human Rights have been set up which hears complaints from individuals and groups alleging that their rights under the European Convention have been violated.

For more information about international human rights law and for

details about the ratification of specific instruments, contact your section or, where there is no section, the International Secretariat, or the offices of intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations.

Appendix 3

(nb this is not the latest version of the AI statute, but the one used in seventh edition of the AI Handbook)

STATUTE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

As amended by the 20th International Council, meeting in Yokohama, Japan

31 August - 7 September 1991

OBJECT AND MANDATE

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 their 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 their convictions and to be free from discrimination by reason of ethnic origin, sex, colour or language, 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 their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language, provided that they have 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 conduct of 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 AI work on violations of human rights in any country or territory, including the collection and evaluation of information, and the sending of missions, lies with the international governing bodies of the organization, and not with the section, groups or members in the country or territory concerned.

SECTIONS

9A section of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL may be established in any country, state or territory 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.

10Groups 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 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

11Individuals residing in countries 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

12The 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 on the International Council.

13All 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 or over:	5 representatives

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

500 - 2,499:	1 representative
2,500 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.

14One 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.

15A 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.

16Notice 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.

17A quorum shall consist of the representatives or proxies of not less than one quarter of the sections entitled to be represented.

18The 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

24a) 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 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL member voluntarily resident in a country 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.

- 25The International Executive Committee shall meet not less than twice a year at a place to be decided by itself.
- 26Members 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.
- 27The 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.
- 28In 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.
- 29If a member of the Committee is unable to attend a meeting, such member may appoint an alternate.
- 30The Committee shall each year appoint one of its members to act as Chairperson.
- 31The Chairperson may, and at the request of the majority of the Committee shall, summon meetings of the Committee.
- 32A quorum shall consist of not less than five members of the Committee or their alternates.
- 33The agenda for meetings of the Committee shall be prepared by the International Secretariat under the direction of the Chairperson.
- 34The 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

- 35The 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.

36The Secretary General may, after consultation with the Chairperson of the International Executive Committee, and subject to confirmation by that Committee, appoint such executive and professional staff as are necessary for the proper conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, and may appoint such other staff as are necessary.

37In 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.

38The 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

39Membership of or affiliation to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL may be terminated at any time by resignation in writing.

40The 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

41An 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.

42No 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

43The 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.

Appendix 4

AI Bibliography

AI produces a great deal of information. This list presents a selection only of the most important items.

To obtain any of these materials, or to find out more about AI's wide range of resources, contact your local group, your section office, or the International Secretariat.

From the INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Materials are issued routinely in AI's core languages: Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. Many items are made available in other languages as well.

Documents are usually classified INTERNAL or EXTERNAL. INTERNAL materials may contain sensitive information about individuals or about AI's organization, and should be restricted to AI members. EXTERNAL materials are intended for members and for public distribution.

For easy filing and retrieval of AI records, the International Secretariat has developed a detailed system of index codes and subject keyword lists that all sections and groups are encouraged to use.

In recent years, the movement has introduced new telecommunications technologies for the distribution of Urgent Actions, news releases, the Weekly Update service, and some country reports.

* Amnesty International Report

Annual book-length summary of AI's concerns worldwide, presented country-by-country. A basic reference document for approaches to the news media, for general outreach, and for building long-term community awareness of human rights. Known informally as the "annual report". EXTERNAL

* Amnesty International Newsletter

Monthly four-page magazine-style summary of AI's current concerns. Distributed widely throughout the movement and available on subscription. Includes a Focus insert on a human rights theme, and the Worldwide Appeals. EXTERNAL

* Amnesty International Handbook

Members' guide to AI's mandate, policies, organization, campaigning techniques, and action forms. EXTERNAL

* Amnesty International Policy Manual

Selected formal texts of policy statements, decisions of the International Council Meeting, and other official AI documents. INTERNAL

* Facts and Figures about AI and Its Work for Human Rights

Biannual four-page summary of AI's history, and up-to-date information on AI's resources and campaigning activities, and the global human rights picture. EXTERNAL

* Action Bulletin

Quarterly newsletter bearing one "success story", plus current cases calling for letter-writing and a coupon inviting membership. Distributed in regions where development is encouraged. EXTERNAL

* Reports and Briefings

Book-length reports and illustrated magazine-style briefings describing AI's concerns in specific countries, or analyzing global themes or patterns of human rights abuses. EXTERNAL

* Pamphlets

A variety of leaflets summarizing AI's principles, its mandate, and its position on difficult questions, such as the death penalty, the violence clause, and work-on-own-country. EXTERNAL

* Audio-visuals

Films, videos, photographs, slides, sound recordings and audio-tapes illustrating AI's general work as well as specific topics, such as the death penalty. EXTERNAL

**

The Weekly Mailing ---> To Sections Only

Loose-leaf package of general information: requests for action, reports and other background documents, country and theme campaign materials, the Weekly Update of news, current Urgent Action appeals, and administrative papers. Contains INTERNAL and EXTERNAL information

**

From SECTIONS

Sections reprint, translate, or adapt the Amnesty International Newsletter and other documents received from the International Secretariat.

Many sections distribute newsletters to their members and groups. Some have created handbooks and group development programs. A few have put together manuals of instruction on topics such as fund-raising.

As well, sections occasionally produce materials that can be helpful to other parts of the movement. Among these are videos, posters, group development binders, and policy files.

From GROUPS

AI groups adapt and reproduce materials provided by their section or by the International Secretariat.

In addition, many groups create newsletters for their members, pamphlets aimed at encouraging new members, printed materials for campaigning projects, and items such as posters for fund-raising purposes.

Appendix 5

AI Glossary

Here are terms and phrases that are unique to AI or that have a special meaning within the movement.

Terms in **bold** type, or their derivatives, are defined in the glossary.

ACTION FILE

Any of several long-term **campaigning** tasks, such as **adoption** or **investigation** cases, or **theme** dossiers, for which exclusive responsibility can be assigned to a small number of local **groups**. Formerly called "case sheet" or "dossier".

ADOPTION

The type of **Action File** in which the **group** carries out long-term **campaigning** for the release of a **prisoner of conscience**.

AFTERCARE

The status of an **Action File** concerning an **adoption** or **investigation** case following the release of the prisoner, when the **group** is asked to carry out humanitarian activities for a limited time. These activities may involve providing **relief** or keeping up correspondence.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WEEK

An annual period of intensified **campaigning** on a human rights **theme** or issue within AI's **mandate**. Normally observed in October.

APPEAL

A formal approach to government officials of a target country on behalf of a human rights concern.

ASIA DISTRIBUTION SERVICE (ADS)

The unit, in Hong Kong, responsible for the distribution of AI materials in Asia.

CAMPAIGN

In AI's usage, a specific term referring to a particular action form:

intensified and coordinated activity for a limited time by large parts of the movement on behalf of a focused concern.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE (CAT)

Any of the worldwide **campaigns** the movement has held to stop **torture**. Also: AI's ongoing program against torture.

CAMPAIGNING

In AI's usage, a broad term referring to AI's continuing program of activity: carrying out coordinated, integrated actions that bring public pressure to bear on governments that abuse human rights.

CASE SHEET. See **Action File**.

COMPANY APPROACH

Outreach to business and financial institutions inviting them to cooperate with AI in human rights work. See also **Military, Economic and Cultural Relations**.

COORDINATOR

An experienced AI member who takes responsibility for managing an area of a **section's** work, such as a "country coordinator" who organizes **campaigning** on a particular target country.

CO-GROUP

Coordination group. A number of **coordinators** (such as a "country co-group") who join together in managing an area of a **section's** work.

CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT (CID)

Harsh treatment that could damage a detainee's physical or mental health, or any punishment of a detainee whose only purpose is to cause suffering. See also **Torture**.

DEATH PENALTY (DP)

The use of execution by the state. It may take the form of the judicial death penalty, where death sentences are provided in law for specific

offences. It may take the form of **extrajudicial execution**, where killings are carried out by state agents acting outside the legal apparatus.

DEATH PENALTY ACTION

Limited **campaigns** involving appeals by AI **groups** to a target government concerning the **death penalty**.

"DEATH SQUAD"

A unit of security officials or their agents, usually operating in plainclothes, that carries out **extrajudicial executions**. In AI's usage, the words are placed in inverted commas to indicate that AI does not accept official explanations that these groups are merely "vigilantes", taking the law into their own hands, or criminal groups with no political motive.

"DISAPPEARANCE"

The taking of a person into custody by or with the approval of the authorities, who then deny that the victim is held. "Disappeared" people are often at risk of **torture** or **extrajudicial execution**. In AI's usage, the word is placed in inverted commas to indicate that AI does not accept official explanations that these people have actually disappeared.

DOSSIER. See **Action File**.

EDITIONS FRANCOPHONES D'AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (EFAI)

The movement's French translation unit, in Paris.

EDITORIAL AMNISTIA INTERNACIONAL (EDAI)

The movement's Spanish translation unit, in Madrid.

EMBASSY VISIT

A formal meeting by a **section**-level delegation with a target country's diplomatic representatives to the home country.

EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS

AI materials, containing no sensitive information about individuals or about AI organizational matters, that may be made available to the public.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION (EJE)

An unlawful and deliberate killing carried out by order of a government or with its complicity. Often called a "**death squad**" killing or a "political" killing.

FAIR TRIAL

Courtroom proceedings conforming with international standards. AI judges the fairness of trials on a case-by-case basis.

GROUP

A number of AI activists who meet regularly to plan and carry out local **campaigning**.

GROUP-IN-FORMATION (GIF)

An AI **group** in an early stage of development and training, pending accreditation. Variouslly called "developing group", "pre-group", "initiative group", and "group-under-establishment".

GROUP-LEVEL ACTION (GLA)

A limited **campaign** aimed at a specific concern in one target country, in which **groups** that are already committed to a long-term task on that country are mobilized, often at short notice.

HOME GOVERNMENT APPROACH

Lobbying of government officials in the activists' own country to ask for help with an AI concern.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION (HRE)

Generally, any activities aimed at increasing public awareness about human rights. Specifically, courses held in schools or universities, or training programs for security personnel and government officials.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (IGO)

An organization of states, such as the United Nations or the Organization of African Unity.

INTERNAL DOCUMENTS

AI materials that contain sensitive information about individuals or about AI organizational matters. These materials should be restricted to AI members and must not be distributed to the public.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING (ICM)

The biennial assembly of representatives of the world movement. AI's supreme governing body that makes fundamental decisions about **mandate**, organization, and policy.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (IEC)

The board elected by delegates at the **International Council Meeting** to carry out the Council's decisions and to supervise the work of the **International Secretariat**.

INTERNATIONAL MEMBER

An AI member active as an individual in a country where a **section** has not yet been formed, and whose work is supported directly by the **International Secretariat**.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (IS)

AI's central office, in London, where research information is collected and where the movement's day-to-day **campaigning** is organized and monitored.

INVESTIGATION

The type of **Action File** in which the **group** makes inquiries of the authorities to try to determine whether a detainee is a **prisoner of conscience**, or to urge a **fair trial** for a **political prisoner**, or to try to locate a **"disappeared"** person.

MANDATE

The movement's basic tasks. The core of fundamental human rights violations about which AI is concerned, and the specific demands the organization makes of governments.

MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS (MEC)

Outreach to domestic military and police sectors, to the business community, and to other organizations with international links, inviting them to cooperate with AI in human rights work. See also **Company Approach**.

MILITARY, SECURITY AND POLICE TRANSFERS (MSP)

The export of military, security and police equipment or skills to specific governments that AI believes might use them to detain **prisoners of conscience**, or inflict **torture** or the **death penalty**.

MISSION

A visit by an international AI delegation to a target country in order to investigate reports of abuses, to observe trials, or to meet with government officials.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY (NGE)

A political body, such as an armed opposition group, that is not party to international human rights standards and therefore not subject to direct appeals based on them. AI is guided by the standards set out in humanitarian law (the "laws of war") in addressing certain abuses by such bodies.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO)

A volunteer or charity organization, such as AI itself, that is not part of any state agency.

OUTREACH

Invitations to professionals, **non-governmental organizations**, and specific social sectors to cooperate with AI in **campaigning** for human rights. Formerly called "target sector work".

POLITICAL KILLINGS BY GOVERNMENTS. See **Extrajudicial Execution**.

POLITICAL PRISONER

In AI's usage, any prisoner whose case has a significant political element: whether the motivation of the prisoner's acts, the acts in themselves, or the motivation of the authorities.

"Political" is used by AI to refer to aspects of human relations related to "politics": the mechanisms of society and civil order, the principles, organization or conduct of government or public affairs, and the relation of all these to questions of language, ethnic origin, sex or religion, status or influence (among other factors).

The category of political prisoners embraces the category of **prisoners of conscience**, as well as people who resort to criminal violence for a political motive. It is only prisoners of conscience who AI demands should be immediately and unconditionally released. AI does not use the term political prisoner to convey any special status for these detainees or to indicate that AI takes a position on their political goals.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE (POC)

A person imprisoned for his or her beliefs, ethnic origin, sex, colour or language, who has not used or advocated violence.

REGIONAL ACTION NETWORK (RAN)

The form of long-term **group** action in which the group joins a worldwide network of groups that develop expertise on one region of the world, but also stand ready to address, at short notice, urgent concerns in that area.

RELIEF

Limited funds or goods provided by AI to victims of human rights violations, or to their dependants, specifically to help them deal with the effects of their suffering.

SECTION

A national AI structure that supports, coordinates, monitors and develops AI activities within a country.

SECTION-LEVEL ACTION (SLA)

A limited **campaign** that mobilizes section staff, officials, or **coordinators**, usually for embassy approaches or home government lobbying.

STATUTE

The official statement of the core aims, methods, and structure of AI.

SUBSCRIBERS

Individuals who receive the Amnesty International Newsletter.

TARGET SECTOR WORK. See **Outreach**.

THEME

In AI's usage, broad categories of human rights violations, such as **torture**, the **death penalty**, **extrajudicial execution**, and **"disappearance"**.

TORTURE

The purposeful infliction of severe pain or suffering on a detainee by public officials or with their acquiescence. See also **Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment**.

TRAINING

In AI's usage, any systematic process designed to help members build on the commitment, experience and expertise they bring to the movement by developing the knowledge and skills that will enable them to work effectively towards the achievement of AI's **campaigning** objectives.

URGENT ACTION (UA)

The rapid action form in which the movement responds, often on a large scale, to emergency concerns.

VIOLENCE CLAUSE

The part of AI's **mandate** that sets **prisoners of conscience** apart from the other categories of detainees on whose behalf the movement works: If a detainee is serving a sentence imposed, after a fair trial, for activities involving violence, AI will not ask the government to release the prisoner.

WORK-ON-OWN-COUNTRY RULE

The principle that helps establish an objective "distance" between the AI activist and the human rights concern: Nationals must not solicit, assess, or act upon information about cases in their own country.

WORLDWIDE APPEALS

Cases concerning individual victims of human rights violations that are featured in the Amnesty International Newsletter and on behalf of which the movement mobilizes on a global scale to send appeals and create publicity.

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One Movement, One Message, Many Voices

This handbook is a basic reference guide for members of Amnesty International.

It shows how ordinary people can raise their voices and send a strong message to governments worldwide: a demand that these governments respect the human rights of every person.

It describes the specific task that Amnesty International has set for itself. It explains how the movement's independence and impartiality help to make its work effective. It draws on the experiences of activists around the world and shares practical ideas for campaigning in local communities.

The aim of this handbook is to create pressure that works -- pressure to set free prisoners of conscience, to get fair trials for political prisoners, to stop the death penalty, torture, and other cruel treatment, and to prevent "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions.

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