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WHAT IS THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL “ICM”?

Amnesty International’s 24th International Council Meeting (ICM) will be held in Tróia, near the city of Setúbal in Portugal, from Friday 13 August to Saturday 21 August. The ICM is the supreme governing body of Amnesty International. It decides on AI strategy, political, financial and organizational issues for the forthcoming years. The Council also elects the International Executive Committee (IEC), to act as the decision-making body of the movement between Council meetings, as well as other committees.

The ICM is an internal, organizational meeting, not open to the press or public. Attendance is strictly limited as to categories of voting (only participants from more than 50 nations that have Amnesty International sections) and non-voting participants (members of the IEC, observers from the smaller groups, Amnesty International’s Secretary General and his International Secretariat staff, members of administrative and policy committees and special guests).

At this ICM, AI members from all over the world will gather in Portugal to take decisions on the future of their movement. Human rights activists from all cultural backgrounds, origins and walks of life, are coming together to discuss important issues which will influence their lives and hopefully those of the people they speak out for. The ICM is an occasion for interaction and communication between all these individuals, an opportunity for building common bonds for future work.

One of the goals of the ICM is to reach consensus on as many issues of possible work by Amnesty International as possible. This often seems impossible to achieve, especially on the most controversial issues. Yet, through a process of shared commitment, mutual respect and friendship, consensus does emerge more often than not, and this process is probably the single most important outcome of any ICM.

Although the ICM itself is internal and not open to outsiders, journalists are welcome to attend the ICM Opening Ceremony at Friday 13 August at 18:00 hours local time in Tróia, where both invited guests and Amnesty International officials will speak about the future directions of this human rights organization and its successes during the past two years.

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