

Statute of Amnesty International

*As amended by the 14th International Council, meeting
in Montreal, Canada, 20-23 August 1981*

OBJECT

1. CONSIDERING that every person has the right freely to hold and to express his or her convictions and the obligation to extend a like freedom to others, the object of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall be to secure throughout the world the observance of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by:
 - a) irrespective of political considerations working towards the release of and providing assistance to persons who in violation of the aforesaid provisions are imprisoned, detained or otherwise physically restricted 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");
 - b) opposing by all appropriate means the detention of any Prisoners of Conscience or any political prisoners without trial within a reasonable time or any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to internationally recognized norms;
 - c) opposing by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons whether or not they have used or advocated violence.

METHODS

2. In order to achieve the aforesaid object, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall:
 - a) at all times maintain an overall balance between its activities in relation to 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 national 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 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, and to the dependants of such persons;
 - g) work for the improvement of conditions for Prisoners of Conscience and political prisoners;
 - h) 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;
 - i) publicize the cases of Prisoners of Conscience or persons who have otherwise been subjected to disabilities in violation of the aforesaid provisions;
 - j) send investigators, where appropriate, to investigate allegations that the rights of individuals under the aforesaid provisions have been violated or threatened;
 - k) 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;
 - l) promote and support the granting of general amnesties of which the beneficiaries will include Prisoners of Conscience;
 - m) adopt any other appropriate methods for the securing of its object.

ORGANIZATION

3. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL shall consist of national 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 national sections.

NATIONAL SECTIONS

8. A national 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 national 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. National sections shall take no action on matters that do not fall within the stated object of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of national sections. National sections shall act in accordance with the working rules and guidelines that are adopted from time to time by the International Council.
9. Groups of not less than five members or supporters may, on payment of an annual fee determined by the International Council, become affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL or a national 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. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of affiliated adoption groups. Groups shall take no action on matters that do not fall within the stated object 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

10. Individuals residing in countries where there is no national 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 national section exists, individuals may become international members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL with the consent of the national section and of the International Executive Committee. The International Secretariat shall maintain a register of such members.
11. Deleted.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

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

National sections consisting primarily of individual members rather than groups may in 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 previous financial year shall vote at the International Council. This requirement may be waived in whole or in part by the International Council.

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

20. The International Council shall be convened by the International Secretariat by notice to all national 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 national sections call an extraordinary meeting of the International Council by giving not less than 21 days' notice in writing to all national sections.
22. The International Council shall elect a Treasurer, who shall be a member of the International Executive Committee.
23. The International Council may appoint one or more Honorary Presidents of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL to hold office for a period not exceeding three years.
24. 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

25. a) The International Executive Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, one representative of the staff of the International Secretariat and seven regular members, who shall be members of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, or of a national section, or of an affiliated group. The regular members and Treasurer shall be elected by the International Council by the direct proportional system of election. Not more than one member of any national section or affiliated group may be elected as a regular member to the Committee, and once one member of any national section or affiliated group has received sufficient votes to be elected, any votes cast for other members of that national section or affiliated group 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.
26. The International Executive Committee shall meet not less than twice a year at a place to be decided by itself.
27. Members of the International Executive Committee, other than the representative of the staff, shall hold office for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-election for a maximum tenure of three consecutive terms. Except in the case of elections to fill vacancies resulting from unexpired terms of office, the members of the Committee, other than the representative of the staff, shall be subjected to election in equal proportions on alternate years.
28. The Committee may co-opt not more than two additional members who shall hold office until the close of the next meeting of the International Council; they shall be eligible to be re-co-opted once. Co-opted members shall not have the right to vote.
29. In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Committee, other than in respect of the representative of the staff, it may co-opt a further member to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the International Council, which shall elect such members as are necessary to replace retiring members and to fill the vacancy. In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Committee in respect of the representative of the staff, the staff shall have the right to elect a successor representative to fill the unexpired term of office.
30. If a member of the Committee is unable to attend a meeting, such member may appoint an alternate.
31. The Committee shall each year appoint one of its members to act as Chairperson.
32. The Chairperson may, and at the request of the majority of the Committee shall, summon meetings of the Committee.
33. A quorum shall consist of not less than five members of the Committee or their alternates.
34. The agenda for meetings of the Committee shall be prepared by the International Secretariat under the direction of the Chairperson.
35. The Committee may make regulations for the conduct of the affairs of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and for the procedure to be followed at the International Council.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

40. Membership of or affiliation to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL may be terminated at any time by resignation in writing.

41. The International Council may, upon the proposal of the International Executive Committee or of a national section, by a three-fourths majority of the votes cast deprive a national section, an affiliated group or a member of membership of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL if in its opinion that national section, affiliated group or member does not act within the spirit of the object and methods set out in articles 1 and 2 or does not observe any of the provisions of this statute. Before taking such action, all national sections shall be informed and the Secretary General shall also inform the national section, affiliated group or member of the grounds on which it is proposed to deprive it or such person of membership, and such national section, affiliated group or member shall be provided with an opportunity of presenting its or such member's case to the International Council.
42. A national section, affiliated group or member who fails to pay the annual fee fixed in accordance with this statute within six months after the close of the financial year shall cease to be affiliated to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL unless the International Executive Committee decides otherwise.

FINANCE

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

AMENDMENTS OF STATUTE

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