



WRITE FOR RIGHTS: EVERY SINGLE WORD YOU WRITE MATTERS



A Write for Rights participant at Amnesty's office in Amsterdam in December 2019. During last year's Write for Rights, more than six and a half million actions were taken worldwide in support of human rights.

© Mariëke Wijnities

On the days around December 10—International Human Rights Day—Amnesty International supporters in Canada and around the world will be taking part in Write for Rights, the world's largest letter-writing event. Here we look at some of last year's Write for Rights cases and report back on how your activism made a real difference in people's lives.

Each year, the world's biggest human rights event just gets bigger. Write for Rights 2019 was no exception, with people writing millions of messages that transformed the lives of young people worldwide.

They came in their dozens, hundreds, even thousands. They were students, parents, teachers, friends—ordinary people who took a moment to tweet, type, draw, or write a message of support for someone they'd never met. They did

this an astonishing 6,609,837 times as part of Amnesty's 2019 Write for Rights—an annual letter-writing marathon that has become the world's biggest human rights event.

What's astonishing isn't that people wrote all those messages—although that, too, is incredible. No, what's astonishing is the difference those messages made to the lives of the young people you supported in 2019. Here are just some examples of how your words changed lives.

MAGAI'S DEATH SENTENCE WAS QUASHED

Magai Matiop Ngong was only 15 when he was sentenced to death in South Sudan. But thanks to the amazing support of people like you, his death sentence was revoked in July 2020. People around the world took an incredible 765,000 actions, including writing letters and tweets, calling for Magai's life to be spared—and it worked. "Thank you so much. I have no words. You have no idea how my heart is filled with happiness," said Magai.

(continued on page 3)



Bob and Tucker Mertens biked across Canada in 2009 to raise money for Amnesty's human rights work.

IN MEMORY OF BOB MERTENS

Amnesty International activist and fundraiser Bob Mertens died tragically in a cycling accident on October 1, 2020, not far from his home in Pinehurst, Nova Scotia. Over several years, Bob undertook three long-distance cycling trips to raise money for Amnesty's human rights work. Together with his son Tucker, Bob cycled 6,344 kilometres across Canada in 2009 and completed a 3,000 km trip through the Andes in Argentina in 2010. And in 2013, Bob cycled alone from Nova Scotia to Guatemala. "Bob embodies what is the very essence of universal human rights," remembers Alex Neve, Amnesty's former secretary general. "Bob made us all better for being in our lives."

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S VISION AND MISSION

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights.

RECEIVING ACTIVIST MAGAZINE

To receive Activist magazine, phone **1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)** and confirm you are a supporter. Published in print three times a year, Activist is free to all Amnesty supporters who request it. Change of address or problems receiving Activist? Contact Sue McNamara at our National Office by email at smcnamara@amnesty.ca

BRANCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Fundraising continues to perform far better than we dared hope when the pandemic started. Fundraised revenue for the first 10 months of 2020 amounted to \$10.776 million, an amount which is less than the budgeted amount of \$10.890 million, resulting in a negative variance of \$114 thousand. Income from other sources amounted to \$33 thousand, resulting in total revenue for the ten-month period amounting to \$10.809 million.

Expenditures for the period amounted to \$11.018 million, an amount which is significantly less than the budgeted amount of \$11.769 million (in early spring, the financial uncertainties that the pandemic brought led to the Branch implementing significant reductions to expenses).

Table of Revenue & Expenditure (in 000s of dollars)

	Actual to October 31	Budget to October 31
Revenues		
Fundraised	10,776	10,890
Other	33	64
Subtotal	10,809	10,954
Expenditures	11,018	11,769
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(209)	(815)

There has been a net deficit from operations for the ten-month period of \$209 thousand as compared to the budgeted deficit of \$815 thousand. Due to the nature of the Branch's annual cash flow forecast, it was anticipated that the Branch would have a substantial deficit by this time of the year. However, November and December are the two most productive months of the year in terms of fundraising, and the Branch is expected to be in a good financial position to start the new year.

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NEXT PRINT ISSUE

The next issue will be mailed by March 11, 2021. The deadline to submit content for that issue is January 11, 2021.

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WRITE FOR RIGHTS: EVERY SINGLE WORD YOU WRITE MATTERS



(cover story continued)

HEALTHCARE WIN FOR GRASSY NARROWS YOUTH

For decades, the Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) First Nation has been suffering the effects of mercury poisoning in one of Canada's worst health crises. The youth of Grassy Narrows have been particularly affected and have been at the forefront of the fight for a healthy future for their community. After years of delay, a \$19.5 million agreement to build a care facility was finally signed on April 2, 2020—a victory for the people of Grassy Narrows. “We are joining hands around the world to combat all the injustice,” said Crystal Swain of Grassy Narrows.

YASAMAN'S SENTENCE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED

In 2019, Yasaman Aryani was sentenced to 16 years in prison in Iran for handing out flowers to train passengers while unveiled. In February 2020, her sentence was substantially reduced, thanks in part to the more than 1.2 million messages written worldwide for her freedom. We won't stop until she's free.



IT'S NOT JUST A TWEET

So, what can a tweet, postcard or signature really achieve? As it turns out, a massive amount. With their words, supporters unleashed a wave of warmth and solidarity across the globe for the young people we featured last year. Those words helped comfort people in distress. They also helped amplify these young people's calls for justice, in some cases persuading leaders to step up and do the right thing by them.

Write for Rights is kicking off again. This year, we're standing by people around the world whose basic human rights are being attacked. These people need you to stand by them. If you have any doubts, read what activist Marinel Sumook Ubaldo has to say. She's a young climate change activist from the Philippines who featured in Write for Rights 2019. Marinel testified at an inquiry launched by a human rights body which eventually declared that fossil fuel companies could be held responsible for human rights harms linked to climate change—a world first.



“Write for Rights made a huge difference to the way I see my activism. It boosts me to believe more in myself. I have realized that, indeed, there is power in numbers,” said Marinel.

So, get writing. Join Write for Rights 2020!

TAKE ACTION

COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives, but it won't stop us from taking action. Your voice and your letters are needed now more than ever to take action on 10 critical global cases. Go to writeathon.ca to sign up and find all of this year's cases (six of this year's cases are also featured on pages 4, 5 and 6 of this newsletter).

SAUDI ARABIA: LOCKED UP FOR DEMANDING WOMEN'S FREEDOM

Nassima al-Sada, a prominent Saudi Arabian activist and human rights educator, has been detained in Al-Mabahith prison in Dammam for over two years.

She has spent many years campaigning for women's freedom, including campaigning for women's right to drive and ending the male guardianship system. She is at risk of being sentenced to a lengthy prison term.

She was arrested on July 31, 2018, and was held in solitary confinement from February 2019 for a year. She has also endured threats and ill treatment. Her first trial session began on June 25, 2019. Her latest trial session in March 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19. So far, all of her court sessions have been closed, with diplomats and journalists banned from attending.

A mother of three, she is allowed one weekly phone call with her family, but no visits, not even from her lawyer. Her detention is part of a recent wave of arrests that target Saudi women's human rights activists.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the King of Saudi Arabia:

- › Ask the King to immediately and unconditionally release Nassima al-Sada and all women human rights defenders and activists detained for their peaceful human rights work.

WRITE TO:

His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
c/o Embassy for Saudi Arabia
201 Sussex Dr
Ottawa, ON K1N 1K6

SALUTATION: Your Majesty

BURUNDI: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER JAILED FOR 32 YEARS

Germain Rukuki is serving a 32-year prison sentence for his peaceful activism in Burundi.

Early on July 13, 2017, he and his wife Emelyne Mupfasoni were woken by heavy footfall and banging on their door. Dozens of security forces had piled into their compound. Officers interrogated the couple, who are both NGO workers. They arrested Germain and transferred him to Ngozi Prison where he has been held ever since.

On April 26, 2018, he was found guilty of sham charges including "rebellion" and "threatening state security". His previous association with the NGO Action by Christians for Abolition of Torture (ACAT-Burundi) was used against him. ACAT-Burundi was shut down in 2016 for allegedly "tarnishing the image of the country". The prosecution used an email Germain had written to them when they were still legal.

Just weeks after his arrest, Emelyne gave birth to their third son, who Germain has never met.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the President of Burundi:

- › Urge the President to release Germain Rukuki immediately and unconditionally.

WRITE TO:

President Évariste Ndayishimiye
c/o Embassy of Burundi
350 Albert St, Suite 410
Ottawa, ON K1R 1A4

SALUTATION: Dear Mr President



Go to writeathon.ca for more information on Write for Rights,
or email us at writeathon@amnesty.ca.

COLOMBIA: ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER IN DANGER



Born in the heart of the Amazon, Jani Silva has dedicated her life to defending the environment. From the age of 16, she has supported the campesino farmers of Putumayo, a region brimming with unique biodiversity.

Jani co-founded the Association for the Integral and Sustainable Development of the Amazonian Pearl (ADISPA) in 2008. Through it, she protects the environment and rights of those living in the Amazonian Pearl, a campesino reserve in Putumayo.

Jani's work placed her at odds with the Ecopetrol oil company, which got a licence to operate in areas overlapping with the reserve. In 2009 the licence was transferred to the Amerisur oil company. Since then, at least two oil spills have poisoned the water sources that local communities depend on.

Defending the environment is dangerous work in Colombia and increasingly so for women and their communities in isolated areas. Armed men followed Jani and threatened her with death. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, state protection has been reduced, while assassinations skyrocketed.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the President of Colombia:

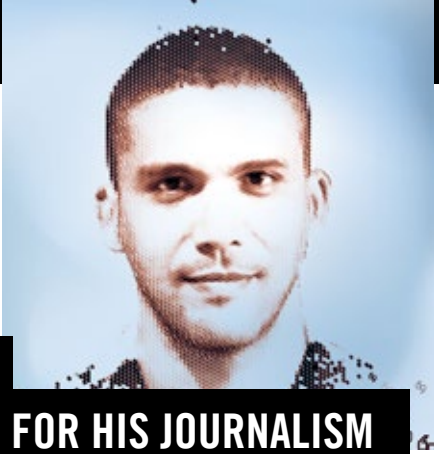
- › Tell the president to protect Jani and all ADISPA members from harm so they can safely defend the land and water their communities depend on.

WRITE TO:

President of the Republic of Colombia
Mr Iván Duque
c/o Amnesty International
312 Laurier Ave E
Ottawa ON K1N 1H9

SALUTATION: Dear Mr President

ALGERIA: IN PRISON FOR HIS JOURNALISM



Algerian journalist Khaled Drareni is in jail because of his coverage of the anti-government Hirak protest movement.

On September 15, he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment by the Algiers Court of Appeal. Khaled was arrested in March 2020 after filming a demonstration. He was charged with "inciting an unarmed gathering" and "endangering national unity" despite the fact he was just doing his job. He had previously been sentenced to three years in jail on August 10.

Since Hirak emerged in February 2019, Khaled was one of the first independent journalists to cover the weekly protests, and he shares the dream of democratic reform. In Algeria, independent press is limited and Khaled made sure to document police violence and arbitrary arrests on his widely followed social media accounts. For this, he has been detained many times.

Reporting a protest should not be a crime. Khaled's conviction is part of a wider attack on press freedom and peaceful assembly in Algeria.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the President of Algeria:

- › Urge the President to immediately and unconditionally release Khaled Drareni, and drop all charges against him.

WRITE TO:

Abdelmadjid Tebboune
Présidence de la République
El-Mouradia – B.P 16000
Algiers, Algérie

SALUTATION: Your Excellency

SEND A COPY TO:

Larbi El Hadj Ali
Ambassador, Embassy of Algeria
500 Wilbrod St
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N2

SOUTH AFRICA: TWO WOMEN KILLED IN GENDER-BASED ATTACK

Three years on from the murders of Popi Qwabe and Bongeka Phungula in Soweto, their families are still waiting for justice.

The two friends disappeared on May 17, 2017. Following a frantic search at hospitals and police stations, Bongeka's cousin Mdu and Popi's sister Thembelihle discovered Popi and Bongeka had been shot and dumped by the side of the road. They may also have been raped.

According to the families, the police failed to properly investigate the murders. A taxi containing the women's bloodstains and belongings was found. While the blood was apparently analyzed, the forensic department never released the results. The families say the police did not check for fingerprints and that the phones belonging to the two women were never traced. Key suspects were released for lack of evidence.

The families are attempting to seek justice and reparations, but to date no one has been held to account.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Minister of Police:

- › Urge the Minister to conduct a thorough, fair and impartial investigation into the deaths of Popi and Bongeka and bring those responsible to justice;
- › Ask him to ensure that all evidence is gathered in a constitutional manner and submitted to the National Prosecuting Authority for prosecution.

WRITE TO:

General Bheki Cele
Minister of Police
Private Bag X463
Pretoria, 0001
South Africa

SALUTATION: Dear Minister Bheki

SEND A COPY TO:

Her Excellency Sibongiseni Yvonne Dlamini-Mntambo
High Commissioner for South Africa
15 Sussex Dr
Ottawa ON K1M 1M8

PAKISTAN: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IN PRISON

Human rights defender Idris Khattak was forcibly disappeared by men in plain clothes on his way home from Islamabad on November 13, 2019.

His family received no news of him. With Amnesty's help, Talia, Idris's daughter, began her fight for his return, despite being warned not to. Her bravery paid off. On June 16, 2020, the authorities finally admitted that he was in state custody. They said he would be charged under the 1923 Official Secrets Act, which provides for up to 14 years in prison or even the death penalty.

Idris, an independent researcher, is a former consultant for Amnesty International and other NGOs, and is Pakistan's leading expert on enforced disappearances. He documented human rights violations faced by people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan. He is diabetic and requires daily medication, and is at greater risk during COVID-19 as the conditions of his detention remain unknown.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Prime Minister of Pakistan:

- › Ask the Prime Minister to release Idris Khattak immediately and unconditionally. If there is credible and admissible evidence of an internationally recognized offence, bring him promptly to justice in a fair trial before a civilian court;
- › Call on him to grant Idris Khattak access to a lawyer and his family.

WRITE TO:

Prime Minister Imran Khan
Prime Minister's Office
Constitution Avenue G-5/2
Islamabad
Pakistan

SALUTATION: Your Excellency

SEND A COPY TO:

His Excellency Raza Bashir Tarar
High Commissioner for Pakistan
10 Range Rd
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J3



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NYAAC FINALIZES PLAN FOR 2021

By Serisha Iyar
Amnesty International Youth Fellow

THIS OCTOBER, the 2020-2022 cohort of National Youth Action and Advisory Committee (NYAAC) members held their first-ever virtual, strategic planning weekend.

Under normal circumstances the NYAAC team, alongside some of the National Youth Team, would have organized a weekend of team building, strategic planning, workplan organizing and more, in Toronto. This time around, COVID-19 forced us to get more creative in developing our work for the upcoming year, and we met this challenge with great enthusiasm!

Over Thanksgiving weekend, the NYAAC met for several hours, spread out across two days, using web conferencing platforms to gather from coast to coast. This shortened timeline allowed the team to work together efficiently and led to effective and succinct decision-making. For the next year, the NYAAC has identified several key priorities and areas of work that will be the group's main focus that fall under the themes of governance, engagement and anti-oppression. The NYAAC is incredibly eager and excited to get moving on projects for 2021 from increasing opportunities for youth activists to creating and supporting systemic change.

To sign up for the youth newsletter or to learn more about the NYAAC, email siyar@amnesty.ca.



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GETTING READY: A NEW SCHOOL SEMESTER

JANUARY IS quickly approaching which brings a new school semester for many! This means that it is once again time to start planning and making sure you have everything you need for the new year.

If you haven't already, please be sure to fill out the 2021 group registration form, updating your group record, and send it together with a copy of your group executive or leadership for 2020/21 to youth@amnesty.ca

If this semester is your first as a group, we can help you get started by sending you a copy of the latest Youth Group Start-up Kit. We will also connect you with a member of our National Youth Team for one-on-one support and training in order for you to get your group up and running.

For further support, you can also email us at youth@amnesty.ca for more information.

CONNECT WITH US AT:

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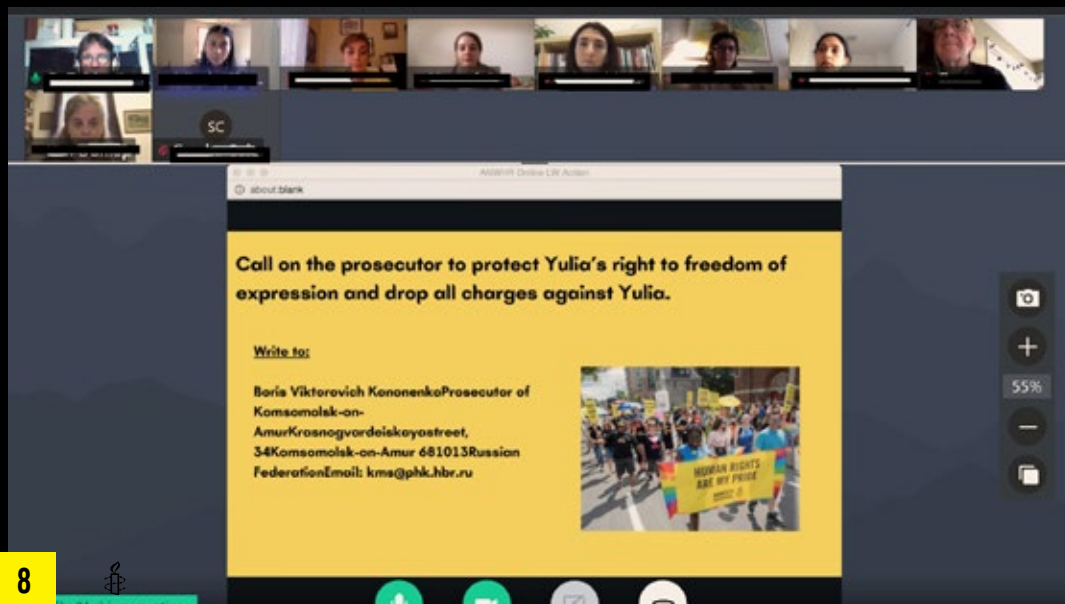
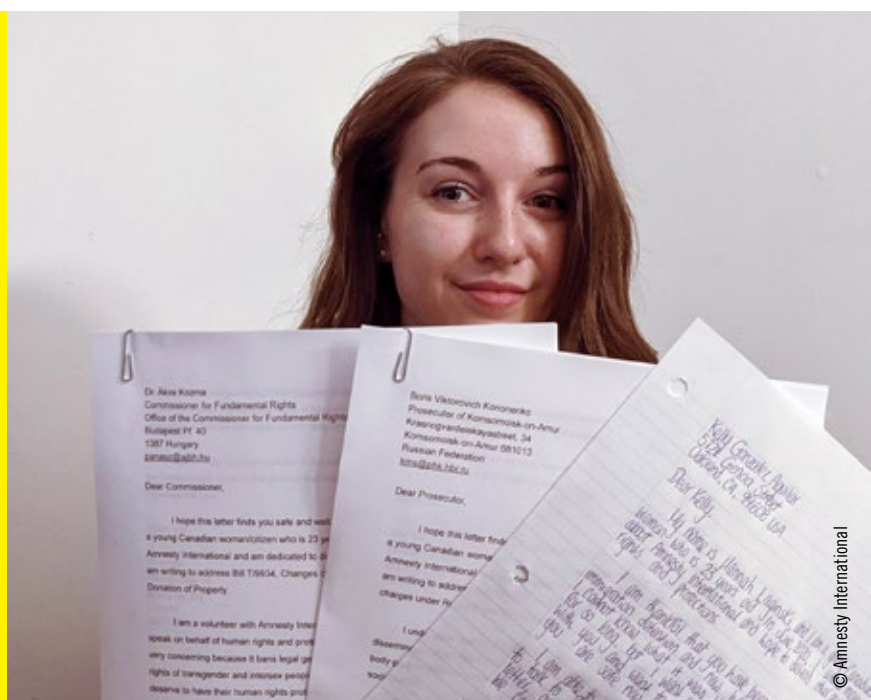
 instagram.com/amnestycanada

 youth@amnesty.ca

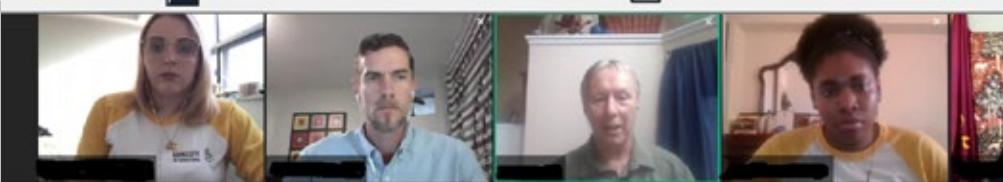


Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Amnesty activists have been online rallying, protesting and continuing to demand change. One of the first online summer initiatives was the letter-writing event to hold police accountable for anti-Black racism. The event was planned and facilitated by our National Organizers.

Hanna was one of the members of the Action Network for Women's Human Rights (ANWHR) who took action for and showed solidarity with LGBTIQ communities during Pride Season.



One of the cases ANWHR took action on was that of Yulia Tsvekova, a Russian artist and activist who is facing absurd charges under Russia's "gay propaganda" laws. Yulia faces six years in prison—simply because she posted art on social media.



Empower and Enact Campaign (Goals)

- Launched by CNCA for Mining Justice Month (May 2020)

- **EMPOWER:**

- Independence and Integrity
- Effective Investigation
- Public Reporting / Transparency
- Recommendations

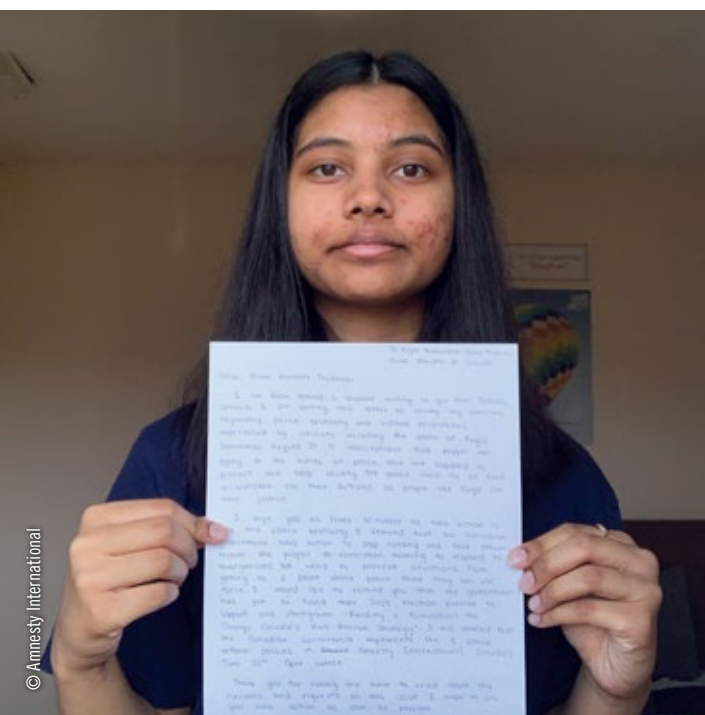
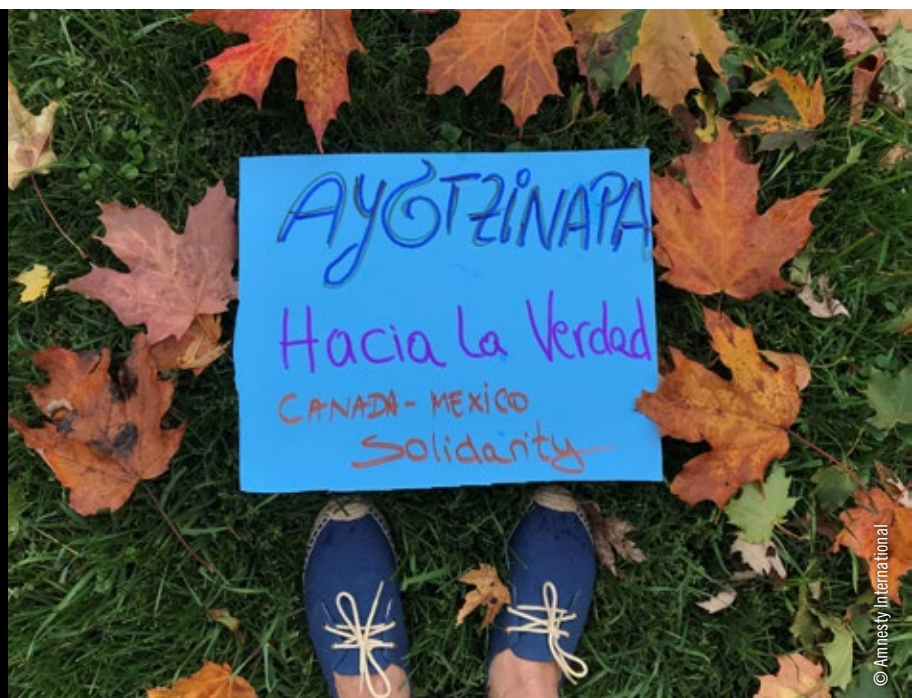
- **ENACT:**

- mandatory HRs Due Diligence



A “Virtual Lobby” online event was jointly facilitated by members of Amnesty’s Specialized Teams, the National Organizers Program, and the Coordinators Program. Joining a network of human rights lobbyists across the country, activists learned how to lobby decision makers on critical human rights issues.

September 26 marked the sixth anniversary of police in Mexico attacking a bus carrying 43 students who were studying to become teachers. Police took the students away. They were never seen again. Activists across Canada showed their solidarity with the families and classmates of the disappeared students of Ayotzinapa by taking part in a virtual march and asking for truth, justice and an end to disappearances in Mexico.



National Organizer Aroni Nur Ahmed was one of the many Amnesty volunteers who took their activism online this year, from campaigning for the communities of Rios Vivos Colombia, to writing in support of women human rights defenders jailed in Saudi Arabia, to letter writing on anti-Black racism.

DON'T SEE YOURSELF ON THESE PAGES?

If you attend or organize an Amnesty International event in your community, please share your photographs with other Amnesty members across Canada. Email high-resolution images with captions to members@amnesty.ca

BOARD REPORT

A GOVERNANCE UPDATE FROM THE BOARD OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADIAN SECTION (ENGLISH SPEAKING) TO MEMBERS, DONORS, ACTIVISTS, AND VOLUNTEERS.

COVID-19 has touched all of our lives in so many ways this year. At Amnesty International, the pandemic has affected much of our work—just as it has affected the work of human rights defenders everywhere. It has also affected *the way* we work at Amnesty.

At Amnesty, we are rethinking how we meet. We are embracing new technologies. And we continue to persevere, knowing that the struggle for human rights for all remains as vital as ever, with new challenges facing our most marginalized and oppressed citizens across the globe.

In late September, Amnesty's Board gathered online for our three-day fall retreat. We received a very positive financial update for 2020 and are grateful to our members, donors and supporters for your ongoing commitment to Amnesty. The Board was also pleased to be joined by Ketty Nivyabandi, our new Secretary General.

KETTY'S FIRST WEEKS AS SECRETARY GENERAL

We are now two months into Ketty Nivyabandi's tenure as Secretary General, and the transition has been a smooth one. In the short time that Ketty has been with us, she has demonstrated clearly the many leadership attributes that we were seeking in our next SG—including experience as a public speaker and organizer with the understanding and practice of purposely harnessing grassroots movement building with the power of research, advocacy and media relations to advance human rights.

UPDATE ON ANTI-OPPRESSION AND WELL BEING

Since May 2019, when the Board published the first communications on "Creating a Valued and Engaged Amnesty", we have continued to oversee the implementation of the priorities set in the 2020 Operational Plan. A Board Committee on Anti-Oppression is taking the lead in fulfilling the Board's governance role in this area, by providing high-level oversight to the Branch's Anti-Oppression Action Plan. An internal staff/management Working Group has begun institutionalizing anti-racism and anti-oppression. Supporting all this work is an Advisory Committee of external experts, with a staff liaison,

PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH

As always, you can reach out to the Board at any time with questions by emailing board@amnesty.ca.

intended to provide advice, support, resources, and education at any level of the organization. Finally, the Board has been working to finalize a membership survey, to draw out ideas from our membership as to what the Branch's anti-racism and anti-oppression action plan needs to focus on to be inclusive of members' experiences, needs and input.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

In September, our colleague and friend Abigail Greenidge resigned from the Board after she accepted a job offer with the Immigration and Refugee Board where she will determine whether refugee claims made in Canada will be accepted or rejected. The Board appointed Shantel Watson to serve out the remainder of Abigail's term until our next AGM in June 2021. Shantel is a researcher and advocate and Amnesty Canada National Organizer. Previously she worked on an initiative focused on educating high school students on *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. Shantel has been a member of the National Youth Action and Advisory Council this past year and was a member delegate to the 2020 Global Assembly.

KEY DATES FOR 2021

- JUNE 5-6, 2021: Annual General Meeting (online meeting)

The Board would like to thank all our members, donors and supporters for your ongoing commitment to Amnesty.

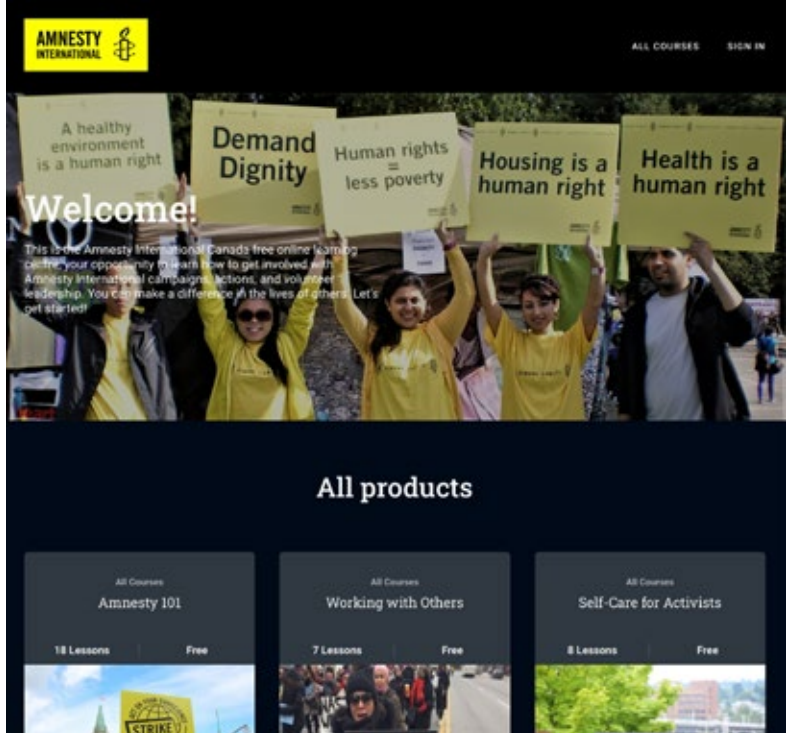
AMNESTY'S ONLINE LEARNING CENTRE: UP-SKILL YOUR ACTIVISM!

WHETHER YOU ARE NEW to Amnesty International or have been taking action for years, check out Amnesty's Online Learning Centre at **AmnestyCanada.thinkific.com**, your opportunity to learn how to get involved with Amnesty's campaigns, actions, and volunteer leadership.

Our human rights education and training platform is easy to use, free, and open to anyone interested in learning about Amnesty International and picking up ideas and insight around taking action for human rights.

If you are new to Amnesty, consider enrolling in **Amnesty 101**. It will take about 40 minutes to complete the course, and will introduce you to human rights and how Amnesty International got started. The course also describes how Amnesty is organized and how you can be involved as an individual or as a member of a school or community group, a specialized team, or as a Youth Organizer or Fieldworker.

The Online Learning Centre currently features three short courses on skills for activists, and more courses are on the way. Each course takes about 20 minutes to complete, and you can opt to download Certificates of Completion.



The course **Working with Others** will help you understand how Amnesty groups and teams work with other organizations to promote human rights. **Photography for Activists** will show you how to take and use event photos to draw public attention to human rights issues, and **Self-care for Activists** describes ways to look after yourself as an activist and avoid burnout.

TAKE ACTION

- Go to **AmnestyCanada.thinkific.com** to start taking your first course.

JOIN THE STRATEGIC GOALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THE BOARD of Amnesty Canada is seeking two members to join the Strategic Goals Advisory Committee (SGAC).

The SGAC is guiding the consultation and engagement process for Amnesty Canada members and others to have input into the new National Strategy for Amnesty Canada. This follows on from the consultation process for the Global Strategy, which is almost complete.

The work will include developing consultation sessions, facilitating online workshops and writing summaries of data gathered from both Amnesty members and non-Amnesty experts. The SGAC will likely meet monthly in 2021 and much of the work will be done in the March–June 2021 period.

Amnesty Canada strongly supports diversity and would like to encourage Black, Indigenous and People of Colour voices.

TAKE ACTION

- Please write to Catherine Sauve at **catherine.amnesty@gmail.com** if you are interested in joining the Strategic Goals Advisory Committee. Include a statement of interest (up to 500 words) as well as other supporting materials—such as your résumé—demonstrating how you could contribute to the Committee.
- The deadline to apply is **December 14, 2020**.



Activists celebrating International Women's Day in Toronto in March 2018. Recently, the Canadian government has been developing a feminist foreign policy and has invited Amnesty International and others to provide input.

COULD 2021 SEE CANADA LAUNCH A TRULY FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY?

By Jackie Hansen
Gender Rights Campaigner

IN 2018, Canada called on Saudi Arabia to release jailed human rights defenders, garnering it some human rights street credentials for taking bold action while other countries remained silent.

In the subsequent two years, Canada has attended trial hearings for the jailed activists and signed joint UN statements calling for their release.

However, Canada has not been willing to use forums like the G20 as opportunities to call for the release of the activists. Canada has continued selling arms to Saudi Arabia that are being used to fuel the ongoing humanitarian crisis in neighbouring Yemen, and Canada maintains a strong trade relationship with Saudi Arabia despite its ongoing crackdown on activists.

When human rights is pitted against economic interests, Canada's foreign policy practice is to prioritize economic interests.

These are the sorts of inconsistencies we want to see addressed in the forthcoming articulation of Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy. Earlier this year, Minister of Foreign Affairs François-Philippe Champagne committed to working closely with civil society to prepare a statement on the Feminist Foreign Policy.

For several years, Canada has listed a number of initiatives as being "feminist" and said that together, they comprise Canada's feminist foreign policy. But Amnesty International and other civil society partners have been calling for a comprehensive articulation of

Canada's feminist foreign policy that goes beyond listing flagship initiatives.

Now Amnesty is delighted to be part of a working group that is engaging in discussions with Global Affairs Canada, and seeking input from a broad range of feminists in Canada and around the world on what should be the core elements of Canada's feminist foreign policy, and the concrete steps they want to see Canada take in the next two years to implement this new policy.

What are Amnesty International's hopes for the Feminist Foreign Policy when it is released in early 2021? To be truly feminist, Canada's feminist foreign policy must transform power structures, boldly turning them on their heads to de-colonize Canada's interactions with the world and address sexism, heteronormativity, racism, and other identity factors in a truly intersectional way.

A Feminist Foreign Policy must tackle inconsistencies

in how Canada addresses issues like Indigenous rights in

Canada and around the world, and cover all areas of Canada's

engagement with the world, from trade and corporate

accountability to refugee and immigration policy.

The Feminist Foreign Policy must tackle inconsistencies in how Canada addresses issues like Indigenous rights in Canada and around the world. And it must comprehensively cover all areas of Canada's engagement with the world, from trade and corporate accountability to refugee and immigration policy.

Stay tuned... hopefully for a truly feminist foreign policy for Canada in 2021! (See [amnesty.ca/ffp](https://www.amnesty.ca/ffp) for the latest updates.)



IMAGINING A SAUDI ARABIA
WHERE WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ACTIVISTS ARE OUT OF JAIL

#IFNOTNOWWHEN

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL 

G20: THE HIGH COST OF DOING BUSINESS WITH SAUDI ARABIA

Jackie Hansen
Gender Rights Campaigner

"MY SISTER sits in a Saudi prison cell as Riyadh hosts a G-20 women's conference," wrote Lina al-Hathloul in an opinion piece published on October 23 in the Washington Post.

Lina's sister, renowned Saudi women human rights defender Loujain al-Hathloul, has been imprisoned for two and a half years for speaking publicly about the kingdom's women's rights record, advocating for the right of women to drive, and wanting to create frontline services to support gender-based violence survivors. She has been tortured. She has not been convicted of any "crime". Court hearings were suspended a year and a half ago. Then suddenly, days after Saudi Arabia hosted November's G20 Leaders' Summit, with less than 24 hours' notice and after being held incommunicado with no access to her family or lawyers for a month, Loujain was brought to court and her case was transferred to the Specialized Criminal Court (anti terrorism court). No further court hearings have been set.

Loujain, Nassima al-Sada, Samar Badawi, Nouf Abdulaziz, and Maya'a al-Zahrani remain jailed for their activism. Other activists have been released but still face charges, while some have been forced into exile, and some remain in Saudi but unable to continue their activism because of the ongoing crackdown on activists and activism.

Saudi Arabia's hosting of the G20 Leaders' Summit was the culmination of a year-long series of meetings, which brought together some of the wealthiest and

most powerful countries in the world, including Canada, to address global issues. It was an important moment for Saudi Arabia to strike business deals and grow its diplomatic power.

Not one country publicly used the meetings to address the human rights record of their Saudi host. When Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz used his November 1 keynote speech at a G20 meeting to discuss human rights in the kingdom, Saudi authorities censored his remarks. Were his remarks delivered in person rather than video conference, he might have been jailed.

Rather than silence, this censorship should serve as a call to action for Canada and other G20 member states. The cost of doing business with Saudi Arabia cannot be silence, or the acceptance of a brutal crackdown on freedom of expression, or allowing activists to sit in prison.

In 2018, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland said that "Canada will always stand up for the protection of human rights, including women's rights and freedom of expression around the world." Amnesty International called on Canada to transform these words into action by calling on Saudi Arabia to put in place genuine rights reforms, and release all the jailed activists, in the lead-up to the G20 Leaders' Summit.

TAKE ACTION

- › Find out more and take action online at amnesty.ca/saudi-arabia-g20
- › Please go to page 4 to take action on Nassima al-Sada's case

ETHICAL BATTERIES: A DECARBONIZED FUTURE MUST RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

By Tara Scurr
Business and Human Rights Campaigner

IN THE LONG MONTHS since the COVID-19 pandemic began, many of us have spent more time at home than usual. During that time, we're also likely to have used more home electronics than usual: video games with the kids, portable speakers blue-toothed to our smartphones, cordless power tools for all those tasks that piled up over the years, or video calls with family.

Consider for a moment the batteries that power those electronics. How many battery-operated devices do you have in your home? Which devices do you consider essential? Do you know where the batteries you use are manufactured or what happens when you dispose of them? Now, consider your neighbours and the number of single use or rechargeable batteries in their own homes.

Decarbonization means that household use of batteries—to power our cars, mobility devices and electronics—is going to increase exponentially. Phasing out fossil fuels requires batteries. For decarbonization to truly benefit everyone, including people who live where battery materials are mined, processed, and recycled, batteries must meet robust sustainability criteria such as:

- › **Design:** for longevity, reuse, and repair
- › **Sourcing:** raw minerals and components must be sourced in a manner that respects economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to a healthy environment

For many of us, our use of home electronics has gone up during the COVID-19 pandemic. We increasingly rely on batteries to power our world. But we need to ensure that those batteries are ethically produced.

- › **Recycling:** mandatory use of recycled materials, health and safety for recycling workers and communities, less toxic recycling processes
- › **Transparency:** end-use companies must be able to track the human rights performance of the companies that mine and produce the components of the batteries in their products and make that information available to the public and to regulators.

Throughout 2021, Amnesty International will call on governments and companies to take steps to realize an energy transition to a decarbonized future that respects human rights and the environment. We invite you to join us.

TAKE ACTION

There are many ways that you can get involved, from participating in our home battery use audit with your family, to reading our new report on lithium mining, to sharing our Principles for Powering Change with your Member of Parliament, to signing our new E-action on January 25:

- › If you would like to join a group of like-minded people from across Canada in our Specialized Team of Energy Transition volunteers, please email Elena Dumitru at edumitru@amnesty.ca.
- › For more information, including our Energy Transition comic book, videos, reports and articles, please visit our webpage at [amnesty.ca/energytransition](https://www.amnesty.ca/energytransition) or contact the Business and Human Rights team at bhr@amnesty.ca.

Amnesty supporters gathered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in 2019 to show their solidarity with the Climate Strike movement and highlight that the climate crisis is a human rights crisis.



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CANADA'S CLIMATE ACTION PLANS MUST RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

By **Fiona Koza**
Business and Human Rights Campaigner

THE CLIMATE CRISIS is a global problem affecting everybody; however, the climate crisis disproportionately affects persons and groups who are subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and to structural inequalities.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada and around the world, and others in the Global South are impacted first and hardest by the climate crisis (yet are the least responsible for causing it). Women, particularly from the Global South, are also amongst those disproportionately impacted, yet their voices are rarely heard in decision-making forums.

Transitioning away from a carbon economy must contribute to enhancing human rights for all.

Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are among the highest in the world. Canada is required to submit an updated climate plan to the United Nations by December 31, 2020. As a wealthy country, Canada should commit to reducing emissions to zero by 2030, or as soon as possible thereafter, in order to avoid the most catastrophic climate consequences for people and their rights.

Transitioning away from a carbon economy as quickly as possible is vital. However, it is also crucially important that the transition is fair for everybody and contributes to enhancing human rights for all.

TAKE ACTION

Send a letter to Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, urging him to:

- › Put people and climate at the centre of COVID-19 economic recovery plans, ensuring that these plans contribute to redressing systemic injustices and inequality;
- › Adopt a 2030 climate target that is consistent with the best science and Canada's international human rights obligations;
- › Centre Indigenous Peoples, their rights, responsibilities and knowledges in the development of climate policy;
- › Help vulnerable communities adapt to climate impacts;
- › Provide sufficient climate finance to the Global South;
- › Rapidly phase out fossil fuel production and consumption, beginning with the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies and the most carbon-intensive fossil fuels;
- › Protect the right to protest and the rights of climate and environmental defenders;
- › Ensure the right to remedy for those whose rights are affected by climate change or climate-related measures; and
- › Adopt "just transition" plans, ensuring that those who lose their job due to the transition are able to secure sustainable and decent work, and that reliable, sustainable and affordable energy is available to everyone, including people living in poverty, women, and Indigenous communities.

WRITE (POSTAGE-FREE) TO:

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

EMAIL: Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca

LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

My belief in Amnesty International's work is even stronger today than it was three decades ago, when I first joined.

Amnesty has made me look at the pandemic from different angles, especially how it affects people so differently. The pandemic has been seized by human rights abusers as a pretext for human rights violations and has put both the most vulnerable and the most courageous, at great risk.

That Amnesty can respond to the human rights aspects of the pandemic in this way has only strengthened my happiness that Amnesty is in my will.

I have faith that in the future Amnesty will continue to protect human rights with the same level of persistence. The pandemic doesn't mean that we can forget about human rights. Amnesty ensures that we don't—today and well into the future.



“Amnesty’s response to the global pandemic has only strengthened my happiness that Amnesty is in my will”

Nancy Kingsbury

During these challenging times, the moment may arise when you begin to reflect on the kind of world you would like to leave behind for future generations. Once you have provided for your loved ones, if you are inspired to make protecting human rights a part of your legacy to the world, please contact us for more information on how to leave a gift in your will.

Please do not hesitate to contact Hala Al-Madi for more information at halmadi@amnesty.ca, 613-744-7667, ext 223, or visit amnesty.ca/legacy.

**THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO TO SUPPORT
AMNESTY’S HUMAN RIGHTS WORK.**

