

MAKING HUMAN RIGHTS AN ELECTION ISSUE

A TOOLKIT FOR THE 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION

vote
rights.
for



HUMAN RIGHTS & ELECTION 2025

Canada's next federal election is on April 28, 2025. The next federal government must make justice, dignity, and equality as its foundational principles. The stakes have never been higher, and the challenges are immense. Urgent action is needed to ensure that human rights are not just ideals but the core of the government's policies.

We must make human rights an election issue.

In coalition with the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability, David Suzuki Foundation, National Right to Housing Network, Oxfam Canada, and Project Ploughshares, Amnesty International Canada has established nine asks for this election on pressing human rights issues.

We need your help to make human rights part of the public narrative by engaging your local candidates this election and in the next federal government's mandate.

This toolkit contains everything you need to make human rights an election issue.

INSIDE YOU CAN FIND

Our Coalition's Top 9 Election Asks + Questions for Candidates

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Ways to Get Involved

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For more details on the human rights issues in each of the 9 election asks, please see [Justice, Dignity and Equality: A Human Rights Platform](#).

To learn more about your candidates and how to vote, visit <https://www.elections.ca>

TOP 9 ELECTION ASKS

+ QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

01 *Advancing Indigenous Rights & Self-Determination*

In order to advance Indigenous rights and self-determination, issues related to Indian Act discrimination, free prior and informed consent, child welfare, residential schools, language and culture, and missing and murdered Indigenous women must be addressed and made paramount.

02 *Use of the Notwithstanding Clause to Override Rights*

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees fundamental rights. Yet, the increasing use of Section 33, the notwithstanding clause, threatens these protections, particularly for 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities.

03 *Racial Justice*

People of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected. A Canadian Employment Equity report underlines this call. A class action by Black federal workers speaks to systemic discrimination in Canada and the UN has declared a second International Decade for People of African Descent to address the lack of progress for transformative change.

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *End Indian Act discrimination.*
2. *Uphold free, prior and informed consent.*
3. *Address the Indigenous child welfare Crisis.*
4. *Investigate potential criminal activities at residential schools.*
5. *Fully implement Indigenous Languages Act.*
6. *Fund murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls initiatives.*

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *End the use of the notwithstanding clause to override rights.*
2. *Rescind discriminatory laws.*
3. *Protect 2SLGBTQQIA+ rights.*

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *Appoint a Black Equity Commissioner.*
2. *Include Black People and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people as new EEA groups.*
3. *Ensure Black workers get remedies.*
4. *Develop support systems for Black federal employees.*
5. *Investigate complaints and conduct regular audits.*
6. *Support the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent.*

TOP 9 ELECTION ASKS

+ QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

04 *Rights of Refugees & Asylum Seekers*

Canada must combat anti-refugee and anti-migrant discrimination and discriminatory discourse, and must meet its international obligation to protect refugees. While governments have the right to design immigration policies, they cannot violate migrants' and refugees' rights.

05 *Corporate Accountability*

Canadian multinationals and importers are implicated in the persecution of Human Rights and Environmental Defenders. The abuses include killings, sexual violence, water contamination, land grabs, and forced labour. From the food we eat, to the clothes we wear, to the metals in our phones, we are all implicated.

06 *Climate Change & Justice*

Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world, and the Canadian Arctic is warming four times as fast. The right to life, health, food, water, housing, education, decent work, cultural rights, and the right to a healthy environment are all at unprecedented risk.

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *Withdraw from the Safe Third Country Agreement.*
2. *Overhaul Temporary Workers Program.*
3. *End use of jails and prisons for immigration detention.*
4. *Ensure access to healthcare.*

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *Pass mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation.*
2. *Empower the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise to be an effective watchdog of Canadian companies abroad.*
3. *End Canada's support to companies that fail to protect human rights and the environment.*
4. *Support the passage of a strong UN treaty on business and human rights.*

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *Support the global effort to avoid the worst effects of climate change.*
2. *Reduce emissions and phase out fossil fuels.*
3. *Help communities increase resiliency in the face of climate change.*
4. *Hold polluters accountable.*
5. *Uphold the right to a healthy environment.*

TOP 9 ELECTION ASKS

+ QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

07

Canada's Housing Crisis

Housing, as a fundamental human right, is recognized in Canada's National Housing Strategy Act (NHSA). Despite this, Canada is in the midst of a deepening housing crisis. Homelessness is on the rise with at least 235,000 people experiencing homelessness annually.

08

Poverty & Inequality in Canada

Poverty and inequality in Canada is a crisis that can no longer be ignored. Canada has to act now to radically and rapidly reduce inequality, decolonize the economy, and invest in poverty reduction by taxing the ultra-rich and ending extreme wealth and power concentration in the hands of a few.

09

International Arms Trade

Canada has flouted its international arms control obligations by transferring weapons to actors that pose a substantial risk of using those arms in serious human-rights violations. Canada has also failed to fully implement its obligations under the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *Strengthen federal leadership on homelessness and housing precarity.*
2. *Protect and expand affordable and non-market housing.*
3. *Implement national standards for renters' rights.*
4. *Prevent and reverse the financialization of housing.*
5. *Address systemic barriers to housing for marginalized groups.*

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *Ensure Canadian corporations pay their fair share of taxes.*
2. *Introduce a permanent wealth tax on the wealthiest Canadians.*
3. *Commit to a public review of federal tax loopholes.*
4. *Ensure oversight of the grocery sector.*
5. *Prioritize low-income housing needs.*
6. *Reduce poverty for people with disabilities.*
7. *Remove barriers to public supports and programs.*

Ask your Candidates to:

1. *End arms transfers to Israel.*
2. *End arms transfers to Saudi Arabia.*
3. *Reintroduce presumptive denial policy on arms exports to Türkiye.*
4. *Close US arms export loopholes.*

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Amnesty needs your support in this election to make human rights part of the public narrative.

There are many ways to get involved, but before you get started, make sure you have registered with us to receive all the latest updates and to ensure we are aware of all election activities.

REGISTER NOW

Only Canadian citizens over 18 as of April 28, 2025, will be eligible to vote in this federal election. Many people are excluded from voting or face barriers to voting, but the results of the federal election and these pressing human rights issues impact everyone. This coalition welcomes everyone to participate in making human rights an election issue, regardless of whether you can or will vote.

You can get involved by helping us **spread the word**, by **talking to local candidates about human rights**, or even by **organizing an event**.



SPREAD THE WORD

One key way you can take action on our top nine election asks is to help us spread the word about these pressing issues. Together, we can make human rights part of the discussion during the 2025 federal election in Canada.

Encourage your friends, family, and networks to join you in making human rights an election issue!

You can also spread the word by sharing Amnesty's election ask social media graphics, available in our social media toolkit.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

Remember to follow us to see the latest updates



@AmnestyCanada



@AmnestyNow



@AmnestyCanada



@Amnesty.ca

Always use the hashtag **#elxn45** and be sure to tag Amnesty Canada and Vote for Rights:

#AmnestyNow #VoteForRights #VoteLouder #RightsFirst

You can also tag your local candidates or the party leaders:

**@liberal_party @MarkJCarney @CPC_HQ @PierrePoilievre @NDP @theJagmeetSingh,
@BlocQuebecois @yfbianchet @CanadianGreens @ElizabethMay @j_pedneault**

TALK TO CANDIDATES ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Throughout the election period, you might connect with local candidates in your community. Whether at a local community event, an organized debate, or they come knocking at your door, you can ask your candidates about our election platform's nine human rights priorities using the questions earlier in this toolkit.





Talking to political candidates can be intimidating, but remember that it is their job to represent you. Candidates want to hear about the issues that are most important to them and to convince them that they will best represent them.

For even more impact, **tell your candidates why human rights issues are important to you.** Emphasize your personal connection when discussing broader issues. You can mention that you are active with Amnesty International or one of our coalition partners. Pick the election asks that are most important to you, especially if you have limited time to speak with a candidate.

Be direct when talking to candidates and explicitly ask your questions. Candidates will try to shift the conversation to their own positions or their party's platforms. Make sure you get an answer and repeat your question if you need to.

Take Action for Human Rights

Amnesty has created online tools for some of the most pressing election issues. Take action now!

-  [Click here to ask party leaders to support human rights >>](#)
-  [Click here to stop the criminalization of Wet'suwet'en land defenders >>](#)
-  [Click here to tell Canada to stop all arms sales to Israel >>](#)
-  [Click here to urge Canada to respect refugee rights by rescinding the Safe Third Country Agreement >>](#)



TALK TO CANDIDATES ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

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At the Door or on the Phone

Throughout the election period, your local candidates might knock on your door or have someone from their team call you to find out if you'll support them. Let them know that you want to vote for a candidate who supports human rights this election. Ask them about our coalition's election platform and their position on the issues.



In the Community

Candidates will try to meet as many constituents as possible during the election period, often by attending community events. If you see your local candidate at a community event, introduce yourself and ask them about our coalition's election platform. Ask them directly if they will support human rights.

At a Local Debate

There is likely at least one local debate being organized in your community. Attend the debate and use the question period to ask candidates about their positions on human rights issues. If possible, bring a friend or member of your local group to try to ask about as many of the election questions as possible.

Local debates are usually limited in time. Often, there will be a lineup at a microphone where you can ask your question. Get in line early to make sure you get a turn and ask your question succinctly while still making a personal connection. Questions might also be submitted in writing.



ORGANIZE A HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE

There are many ways to engage with your candidates, but if you have an interested group in your community, you can organize your local candidates' debate.

Amnesty International is not a partisan organization, and, particularly during the election period, it is essential that your debate remain nonpartisan. We encourage you to invite local candidates from all federal parties with current Members of Parliament.

Local debates are a key way for community members to connect with local candidates and learn about their stances on human rights issues. Debates can also help raise awareness of pressing human rights issues in your community.

Invite your local candidates to a debate, or alternately, consider hosting a panel on one of the key election asks.

Connect with other groups who might be interested in organizing a local debate, especially those who might be directly impacted.

Use **Amnesty's Event Planning Checklist** to ensure you have covered all the key elements of an event.

In particular, consider the accessibility of your event. This can include the physical accessibility of your venue and set-up, the financial accessibility of your event, and the inclusiveness and barriers surrounding your event.

There are many formats for candidate debates. Consider the format that would work best for your community and your group. Some formats include:

- Questions from the audience, either preselected or at a microphone
- Candidate panel, where each is given equal time to present on an issue
- Meet and greet, to allow more informal interaction with candidates
- Speed dating, to allow small audience groups the chance to sit down with each candidate

No matter the format you choose, make sure you have a strong Moderator. Successful debates depend on a Moderator who can keep the conversation on track, ensure every candidate gets a chance to speak, and makes sure that candidates are answering the questions.

We're here to help!

Contact us at activism@amnesty.ca if you have any questions about organizing an event.

Funding is available for Amnesty International activists to organize events.

PARTNERS

