

AIUSA Guideline: PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION/COOPERATION WITH OUTSIDE GROUPS

NOTE: This is a brief abridgement of guidelines adopted by the Board in 1992. Your group should already have the full text; if you need a copy, contact your regional office.

I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

All types of AIUSA cooperation with other non-governmental organizations must relate to activities which are a part of AIUSA's own plans and strategies; remain consistent with AIUSA's mandate and policy; and be approved by AIUSA staff if there is any possibility they do not fulfill these two requirements.

If you are considering cooperation, ask yourselves these questions: What are your goals? Do they fall within the international goals of gathering information, developing the movement, and increasing work against violations within AI's mandate? Are you sure they don't contradict AI's mandate? If you have any doubts, contact your Area Coordinator or regional staff. Can your goals be accomplished by informal cooperation? If so, try this first.

II. INFORMAL COOPERATION

This might include group members' informal attendance at each other's meetings or events; mutual advice and consultation; sharing AI materials with other organizations. You can present AI's mandate and concerns to members of any group, even a political group, if the meeting is not publicized AND your sole purpose is to brief and/or advise them on how they can work on issues within AI's mandate. You can appear at other groups' public meetings if your sole purpose is to promote AI's program or agenda. You can join a panel if it includes a broad spectrum of organizations (political diversity is especially important). You should never appear as an AI representative at a campaign rally, issue rally (on a referendum, for example--unless it directly relates to an issue in AI's mandate), or a public event sponsored by a political party.

III. MATERIALS

Do not distribute beyond your group any AI documents marked "internal." You may distribute public AI documents to any group which does not violate AI's mandate (i.e., by advocating violence). Do not give any AI mailing list to another organization.

Your group may purchase materials from other organizations, for internal use and education, if they relate to AI's mandate. Distribution by an AI group of materials printed by other organizations must be approved in advance by staff; some (particularly single-country information or documents which show political bias) are not likely to be approved. AI groups should not be involved in joint publication of materials with another organization.

IV. PHYSICAL SPACE

Generally, AI groups or leaders should not share an address, office space, or phone number with a peace center, community center, or another organization. AI events and meetings may be held in a variety of places as long as the location is open to the public for the event or meeting and the site does not conflict with Amnesty's message (i.e., public buildings, schools, universities, churches, hotels, private homes, etc., are OK).

V. FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT

Generally, AI groups should not pay another group, or help another group pay for, honoraria, fees, advertisements, polls, press conferences, etc., unless the project or event falls entirely within AI's mandate and priorities. For example, if an AI group is paying for a former prisoner to visit the area for an event, the group can offer that person as a speaker for other groups' meetings or events (provided, of course, it has the speaker's permission). If your group wishes to make donations to another group, consult regional staff.

VI. FORMAL COOPERATION AND AFFILIATION

This type of relationship poses a threat to AI's independence and impartiality and requires formal approval; check with your AC or regional staff. Generally, affiliation with social/ service clubs and women's/ethnic/professional groups are acceptable. Affiliation with political parties, solidarity groups (i.e., Central American solidarity, anti-apartheid groups), or groups advocating violence are generally unacceptable. Co-sponsorship of any event requires approval. Otherwise, use publicity such as: "Sponsored by ABC Church with assistance from AI Group 0"; "Sponsored by Amnesty International X High School Group with the support of Y Key Club"; "Speaker sponsored by the French Club; reception sponsored by Z College Amnesty International Group." The exception to this rule: many student groups can get funds only if they co-sponsor events with an academic department or student government. Students do not need approval for this kind of co-sponsorship.

VII. COALITIONS OR UMBRELLA GROUPS

Participation in coalitions is allowed in death penalty abolition work (local, state, and national coalitions); refugee work (national councils and umbrella groups); human rights national councils and advisory committees. Refugee coalitions may be local but must address national issues. When in doubt, consult an AC or regional staff. Limitations apply.

VIII. SPECIAL RULES FOR DEATH PENALTY COALITIONS

State death penalty coordinators, local AIUSA groups, and area coordinators can become associate members of abolition coalitions without specific approval. This is the simplest and easiest way to participate in such coalitions (rather than formal affiliation). AI reps can attend general meetings of the coalition, participate in overall strategy-setting, public events, passage of legislation, etc. AI cannot be listed on the coalition's letterhead or in its publications as a member; AI cannot make donations or pay dues. Any group which wishes to do these things must receive approval for co-sponsorship. When in doubt, ask.

State death penalty coordinators, local AIUSA groups, and area coordinators can become regular members of death penalty abolition coalitions for limited periods of time, for work on a particular state project which falls within AI's mandate and programs (i.e., legislative work). Consult regional staff before obtaining such status; you will need to inform staff about the specific project planned, the other members of the coalition (which must be diverse), and the end date of AI's affiliation.

IX. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CO-SPONSORSHIP OR AFFILIATION

If your AC and regional staff turn down your proposal or if, in your opinion, it has been unduly delayed or made subject to impractical conditions, you can appeal the decision to the Board Ombudsperson, who will look into the matter promptly, consult all affected parties, and make a binding decision within thirty days of receipt of a written appeal.