



2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SPEAKER BIOS

Rasha Abdul-Rahim | International Secretariat of Amnesty Tech

Rasha Abdul Rahim is Deputy Director of Amnesty Tech and oversees its work on Big Data and artificial intelligence and leads Amnesty's work on autonomous weapons. Before that, she was a Researcher/Advisor in the Military, Security and Police Team, where she worked on various arms control issues, including the Arms Trade Treaty.

Session: Humanity at Risk: Climate Change, Artificial Intelligence & the Future of Human Rights

Alireza Azizi | Country Specialist for Amnesty International USA

Member of the Middle East Coordination Group of Amnesty International USA, covering Yemen, UAE, and Qatar. He has participated in three research missions to Yemen as part of the AI delegation. He has been a member of AI for over three decades and has served in various positions from local group coordinator to serving on the AIUSA board of directors. He has also participated in several international meetings representing AIUSA.

Session: U.S. Arms Sales and the Hidden War in Yemen: Campaign Opportunities Ahead

Eduardo Beckett | Immigration Lawyer

Eduardo Beckett is an immigration lawyer representing asylum-seekers in Texas.

Session: Campaign Plenary – Families Belong Together and Free: Supporting Refugee Families in This Time of Crisis

Simon Billonness | Co-chair of the AIUSA Business and Human Rights Group

Described by the New York Times as “a super-specialist” in human rights advocacy, Simon Billonness serves as co-chair of the AIUSA Business and Human Rights Group (BHRG), where he helps develop and implement AI's strategies to hold corporations accountable. He served on the AIUSA board of directors from 2005-2011.

Session: Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories: Tourism – Tool of Displacement

Paul Bloom | Prof Emeritus at University of Minnesota

Paul Bloom is Prof Emeritus at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus. Along with his wife, Meg Layese, he has been advocating for human rights, social justice, and environmental justice in the Philippines since the 1980's. He is an active member of AI Group 37 and Legislative Coordinator for Minnesota.

Session: Human Rights Defenders Under Attack in the Philippines: How You Can Help!

Leslie Cushman | Attorney for Olympia Washington

Leslie Cushman is an attorney and community organizer from Olympia, Washington. Leslie was the “citizen sponsor” of I-940, a grassroots state-wide initiative to reform police practices regarding the use of deadly force. I-940 passed overwhelmingly in November 2018. Leslie also served as the communication co-chair of the campaign. Leslie is a member of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ Ministry on Dismantling Racism.

Session: What's the Deal with Washington State?: End the Death Penalty and Make Progress Towards Unlawful Killings by Police in Your State

Clíodhna Joyce-Daly | Law student

Clíodhna Joyce-Daly is currently doing her Masters of Law at Dublin City University.

Session: Art as Activism

Alexis De Simone | Senior Program Officer at Solidarity Center

Alexis De Simone is a Senior Program Officer at the Solidarity Center, where she promotes rights education and organizing campaigns with rural, women, informal, and migrant workers in Latin America. She leads programming around labor violence, the targeting of unionists as human rights defenders, and gender-based violence at work.

Session: Anti-Union Violence & Human Rights Defenders in Central America

Sheetal Dhir | Senior Campaigner for Crisis and Tactical Response at AIUSA

Sheetal Dhir is the Senior Campaigner for Crisis and Tactical Response at Amnesty International. She covers crisis response work on developments arising from conflicts, coups, and other events that result in sudden, widespread and serious human rights.

Session: Fighting for Human Rights in My Backyard: State & Local Human Rights Campaigns

Daphne Eviatar | Director of the Security with Human Rights Program at AIUSA

Daphne Eviatar is Director of the Security with Human Rights Program at AIUSA.

Session: The U.S. Global Killing Spree: How to Stop It

Andrew Fandino | Senior Program Officer for the Individuals at Risk Program at AIUSA

Andrew Fandino serves as the Senior Program Officer for the Individuals at Risk Program at AIUSA, where he is the focal point for all work related to human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience. He brings with him over 19 years of involvement in human rights issues.

Session: Human Rights Defenders Under Attack in the Philippines: How You Can Help!

Marya Farah | Consultant for AI-Haq

Marya Farah is a consultant on international human rights law and advocacy. Her current focus of research with AI-Haq is related to Israel's policies of displacement of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Prior to joining AI-Haq, she worked with the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva and Cairo.

Session: Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories: Tourism – Tool of Displacement

Caraline Fearheller | Peace Studies student

Caraline Fearheller is a senior Peace Studies and Political Science double Major at Manchester University. She is an active member of the Kenapocomoco Peace Coalition and the Feminist Student Union. Her passions include creating spaces for students and community members to organize together and learn from one another.

Session: Using the Human Rights Framework to Create Change on Campus

Edith Garwood | Country Specialist on Israel/OPT/Palestine at AIUSA

Edie Garwood is the Country Specialist on Israel/OPT/Palestine for Amnesty International USA (AIUSA). She is a long-time grassroots activist concentrating on the region. Her first trip to Israel/Occupied Territories was in 1987; her last in 2016.

Session: Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories: Tourism – Tool of Displacement

Emma Green | Student Activist Coordinator at AIUSA

Emma M. Green serves as a Student Activist Coordinator in Ohio and serves on AIUSA's IDEA Council. She studies Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at Ohio Northern University. Her favorite methods of activism are education and event organization.

Session: The Intersectionality of Gun Violence: How to Transform the Conversation

Emilio Gutierrez Soto | Journalist

Journalist Emilio Gutiérrez Soto is an award-winning Mexican journalist based in the U.S., where he was detained twice while pursuing his claim for asylum. A recipient of a 2018-2019 Knight-Wallace Fellowship, he is the Senior Press Freedom Fellow at the University of Michigan.

Session: Families Belong Together and Free: Supporting Refugee Families in This Time of Crisis

Randy Harper | History and Social Studies teacher in Maine

Randy Harper is an award winning teacher of history and social studies at Maine West High School in Des Plaines IL. Randy serves as faculty adviser for “Voice for the Voiceless”, a student human rights group. He’s been teaching there for 32 years and will be retiring after this year.

Session: Facilitating Human Rights Education Programs on Refugee Crisis at High Schools

Jorge Hernandez | Honduran human rights expert

Jorge Hernandez is a Honduran human rights expert who helps threatened trade unionists and campesino leaders from across his country create solidarity networks, risk mitigation strategies, and ground-breaking reports on anti-union violence. His work was fundamental to the International Labor Organization’s shortlisting Honduras among the worst violators of workers’ human rights.

Session: Anti-Union Violence & Human Rights Defenders in Central America

Ashley Houghton | Tactical Campaigns Manager

Ashley Houghton is a Tactical Campaigns Manager with AIUSA, where she's responsible for driving campaigns in anticipation of urgent, critical human rights situations and leads AIUSA's domestic refugee rights campaign. "The Longer Table Initiative" includes grassroots actions in a nation-wide effort to foster and empower communities who publicly support refugees.

Session: Campaign Plenary – Families Belong Together and Free: Supporting Refugee Families in This Time of Crisis

Katrina Johnson | Activist

Katrina Johnson is the cousin of Charleen Lyles, a pregnant mother of four that was shot and killed by the police after calling for assistance. She works with other families of Washington similarly impacted by this violence to pass policing reform.

Session: What's the Deal with Washington State?: End the Death Penalty and Make Progress Towards Unlawful Killings by Police in Your State

Zeke Johnson | AIUSA Senior Director of Programs

Zeke Johnson is the Senior Director of Programs at Amnesty International USA. He leads the organization's team of thematic issue experts working to end human rights violations in the United States and around the world.

Session: Humanity at Risk: Climate Change, Artificial Intelligence & the Future of Human Rights

Melineh Kano | Executive Director of RefugeeOne

Melineh is the Executive Director of RefugeeOne where she's overseen the creation, implementation, and evaluation of all RefugeeOne programs. As an Armenian refugee from Iran, she is passionate about creating a welcoming community for refugees from around the world. She received her degree in Business Management from the University of Rome and is fluent in five languages.

Session: Campaign Plenary – Families Belong Together and Free: Supporting Refugee Families in This Time of Crisis

Jesse Langdon | Peace Studies student

Jesse Langdon is a junior Peace Studies and Political Science major at Manchester. He is also passionate about expanding interfaith dialogue and creating interfaith events on campus.

Session: Using the Human Rights Framework to Create Change on Campus

Chiara Liguori | AI Policy Adviser

Chiara Liguori is a Policy Adviser at the International Secretariat of Amnesty. She leads on developing the policy and strategy work on climate change and human rights. Previously she worked as Caribbean researcher in Amnesty's Americas Program, as Human Rights Officer at the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti and as Programme Officer at UNDP Comoros.

Session: Humanity at Risk: Climate Change, Artificial Intelligence & the Future of Human Rights

Rebecca Ma | AIUSA's Associate Campaigner

Rebecca Ma is a Campaigner with AIUSA, where she supports the "I Welcome" campaign and drives individual-focused case campaigns for the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. Prior to AIUSA, she studied and volunteered in Santiago, Chile and Buenos Aires. Rebecca received a B.A. in International Studies from American University.

Session: Breaking Down the Wall – Building Bridges with People in Support of Refugees and Asylum-seekers

Nerve Macaspac | Country Specialist at AIUSA

Dr. Nerve V. Macaspac is the Philippines Country Specialist for Amnesty International USA. He received his PhD in Geography at UCLA and a Masters degree at UC Berkeley. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Geography at The City University of New York.

Session: Human Rights Defenders Under Attack in the Philippines: How You Can Help!

Emma Marks | AIUSA Campus Chapter President at Wilmington College

Emma is a junior at Wilmington College and the Ohio LC. This fall, Emma collaborated on the End Gun Violence campaign that prevented Ohio from adopting a Stand Your Ground law. She advocates with the Friends Committee on National Legislation and will be interning at the Peace Culture Village in Hiroshima, Japan this summer.

Session: Fighting for Human Rights in My Backyard: State & Local Human Rights Campaigns

Jim McDonald | Country Specialist at AIUSA

Jim McDonald is the Sri Lanka Country Specialist for AIUSA and a member of the Chicago local group. He has testified before Congress on Sri Lanka for AIUSA and has coordinated several Sri Lanka campaigns by AIUSA members.

Session: Arts Against Enforced Disappearances in South Asia

Laura Michalski | Regional Representative for Human Rights Educators USA

Laura Michalski has been an educator for 15+ years in the U.S. and abroad to a variety of students. She is the regional representative and serves on the Steering Committee for Human Rights Educators USA. Laura holds a BS in Deaf Education and Masters degrees in International Relations and Teaching.

Session: Facilitating Human Rights Education Programs on Refugee Crisis at High Schools

Blaine Mineman | Area Coordinator

Blaine Mineman is a member of the Chicago local group, focusing on human rights education and coordinating outreach at festivals with Rhythm N' Rights. He previously served as a Director of Finance for Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Arcelor-Mittal Steel. Blaine earned an MBA and a BA in Political Science from the University of Illinois.

Session: Facilitating Human Rights Education Programs on Refugee Crisis at High Schools

Baaqeyah Muhammad El | AIUSA Campus Chapter President at Arcadia University

Baaqeyah Muhammad El is a senior Biology major and Criminal Justice minor at Arcadia University. She is president of her school's Amnesty chapter and a member of Amnesty International's Youth Collective. She is passionate about equity and justice.

Session: Youth Training: Know and Claim Your Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Kumi Naidoo | Secretary General of Amnesty International

Kumi Naidoo is a life-long social justice campaigner hailing from South Africa. Born in Durban in 1965, Kumi's first taste of activism came at age 15 when he organized and took part in an anti-apartheid protest that saw him expelled from his school. Kumi has held multiple leadership roles, but his time as Executive Director of Greenpeace International cemented his reputation as a bold activist who championed civil disobedience. Kumi's is a co-founder and interim chair of the pan-African organization, Africans Rising for justice, peace and dignity. It was seeing a letter that Nelson Mandela had written to Amnesty International in 1962, thanking the organization for sending a representative to observe his trial, that inspired Kumi to apply for the role as the global head of Amnesty.

Session: Official Opening of the AGM

Philippe Nassif | Middle East/North Africa Advocacy Director

Philippe Nassif is the Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International USA. Philippe works with U.S. government representatives in Congress and the executive branch to ensure that human rights are prioritized and protected across the region. Before coming to Amnesty, Philippe worked at In Defense of Christians in the Middle East, where he advocated on behalf of persecuted religious minorities. Before that, he worked at the poverty fighting organization CARE USA, The Obama Presidential Campaign, The White House on President Barack Obama's advance team, and for the Mayor of Houston, Texas.

Session: U.S. Arms Sales and the Hidden War in Yemen: Campaign Opportunities Ahead

Laura Nuechterlein | AIUSA's State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator in Washington

Laura Nuechterlein is AIUSA's State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator for Washington State and serves as the Board Chair of Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Session: What's the Deal with Washington State?: End the Death Penalty and Make Progress Towards Unlawful Killings by Police in Your State

Kit O'Connor | I Welcome Campaign Coordinator

Kit O'Connor is the I Welcome Campaign Organizer, working with the Organizing & Activism Unit on the Refugee Campaign. A lifelong New Englander, they were previously the Legislative Coordinator for Amnesty International in Vermont where they worked with membership in Burlington to pass an I Welcome resolution in 2016. They now reside in Frankfort, KY.

Session: Breaking Down the Wall – Building Bridges with People in Support of Refugees and Asylum-seekers

Cristina Palabay | Secretary-General KARAPATAN

Cristina Palabay is the Secretary General of the Filipino human rights coalition called KARAPATAN (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights). She is a Regional Council member of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and an advisor to the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights.

Session: Human Rights Defenders Under Attack in the Philippines: How You Can Help!

Ben Palmquist | Campaign Manager for National Economic Social Rights Initiative

Ben is from the Bay Area and has devoted his life to social justice. Besides his work with the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, he has been involved with the Urban Justice Center, Center for Urban Pedagogy, Hester Street Collaborative and an Ecuadorian shelter for children.

Session: Healthcare is a Human Right

Akriti Panthi | AIUSA Student Activist Coordinator

Akriti Panthi serves as a member of St. Louis's local group with two focuses: business and human rights and human rights in Nepal. She has served on regional and annual conference organizing committees and as SAC for Missouri for over four years.

Session: Arts Against Enforced Disappearances in South Asia

Scott Paul | Senior Humanitarian lead at Oxfam US

Scott Paul is Senior Humanitarian Lead at Oxfam America. He has led Oxfam advocacy work on U.S. arms sales. Many of the gains on this front have been led by Scott. Scott visits Yemen regularly.

Session: U.S. Arms Sales and the Hidden War in Yemen: Campaign Opportunities Ahead

Emily Quinn | AIUSA's Sexual and Reproductive Rights Peer Trainer

Emily is a junior at Barnard College, studying Political Science and Economics. As an SRR Peer Trainer, she is passionate about combining human rights advocacy with dialogue, by creating spaces to freely discuss and explore human rights concepts.

Session: Youth Training: Know and Claim Your Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Rawya Rageh | AIUSA's Senior Crisis Adviser

As Senior Crisis Adviser for Amnesty International, she led a research mission to Yemen and wrote a comprehensive report on human rights violations by the UAE-supported forces in southern Yemen.

Session: U.S. Arms Sales and the Hidden War in Yemen: Campaign Opportunities Ahead

Virginia Rendler | AIUSA Campus Chapter President at Manchester University

Virginia is the president and founder of the Manchester University Amnesty International Student Chapter. She is also involved with the Kenapocomoco Peace Coalition, United Sexualities and Genders, and is a Peace Studies and Philosophy major with a minor in Spanish. She is passionate about campus organizing and human rights work.

Session: Using the Human Rights Framework to Create Change on Campus

Susan Rogers | Retired Doctor from John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital

Dr. Rogers lives in Chicago, Illinois. She recently retired, is a volunteer attending hospitalist and internist at the John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County. She previously was co-director of medical student programs for the Department of Medicine. She is also assistant professor of medicine at Rush University, where she is active on the committee of admissions, and assistant professor of medicine at Rosalind Franklin University.

Session: Healthcare is a Human Right

Krissy Roth | AIUSA Senior Program Office for Criminal Justice

Krissy Roth is Senior Program Officer for Criminal Justice Programs, where she oversees AIUSA's work to end the death penalty and stop unlawful killings by police. She collaborates with State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators and other members to halt domestic state sanctioned killings.

Session: What's the Deal with Washington State?: End the Death Penalty and Make Progress Towards Unlawful Killings by Police in Your State

Maria Elena Sabillon | Solidarity Center Project Coordinator for Honduras

Maria-Elena Sabillon is the Solidarity Center Project Coordinator for Honduras. She accompanies workers and union organizations under threat, and serves as legal counsel in labor violence cases, helping victims apply for protective measures, provide statements to law enforcement, and seek safety and justice. She's currently drafting national legislation to combat gender-based violence.

Session: Anti-Union Violence & Human Rights Defenders in Central America

Georgina Shanley | Member of South Jersey Local Group AIUSA

Georgina Shanley is the force behind New Jersey's South Jersey Local Group, and a passionate fighter for human rights. She is particularly involved in promoting quality healthcare access for all and has been engaged extensively throughout Amnesty.

Session: Healthcare is a Human Right

Wamia Siddiqui | AIUSA's Group Coordinator for Rutgers University

Wamia Siddiqui serves as a New Jersey Student Activist Coordinator and is the Group Coordinator for Rutgers University. She is a member of the Youth Collective and AIUSA's National Resolutions Committee and is a passionate human rights advocate.

Session: Healthcare is a Human Right

Nate Smith | Chair of AIUSA's Military, Security and Police Co-Group

Nate Smith is chair of Amnesty International USA's Military, Security and Police Co-Group, a group of volunteer experts focusing policy and advocacy relating to the arms trade and use of force. He attended Arms Trade Treaty negotiations as the AIUSA representative on the global Amnesty delegation in both the July 2012 and March 2013 conferences. He was also part of AIUSA's human rights observer delegation to Ferguson, Missouri in August 2014, and to Baltimore, Maryland in 2015. Nate holds a Master's of Public Policy from the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, where he specialized in human rights, international policy and quantitative analysis. He has been an Amnesty International activist since 2011.

Session: U.S. Arms Sales and the Hidden War in Yemen: Campaign Opportunities Ahead

Andrea Sutherland | Director of Artistic Partnership Program

Andrea Sutherland is the Director of the Artistic Partnership Program for Acting Out Awareness.

Session: Art as Activism

Catherine Cruz Sy | Deputy Chief of Staff of Senator Leila de Lima

Catherine Sy has been working with Senator de Lima of the Philippines for eight years. First, as de Lima's Executive Assistant during her first year in the Commission on Human Rights, then as her Chief of Staff at the Department of Justice, and now as her Deputy Chief of Staff.

Session: Human Rights Defenders Under Attack in the Philippines: How You Can Help!

Mikala Teramoto | Student Activist Coordinator at Arizona College

Mikala H. Teramoto serves as Student Activist Coordinator for Arizona. She studies Political Science and Public Health at the University of Arizona Honors College and her favorite methods of organization are education and forming coalitions.

Session: The Intersectionality of Gun Violence: How to Transform the Conversation

Emily Walsh | AIUSA'S Human Rights Defenders (HRD) Campaigner

Emily Walsh is AIUSA's Human Rights Defenders (HRD) Campaigner, leading the organization's work on protecting the rights of HRDs. Emily will also be leading the Refugees Welcome Resolutions initiative in close partnership with member leaders. Emily previously worked on AIUSA's Individuals at Risk team and has also served as a human rights observer at Standing Rock and Guantanamo Bay. This is Emily's eighth year with AIUSA. Connect with her on Twitter @EmilyWalshAI.

Session: Fighting for Human Rights in My Backyard: State & Local Human Rights Campaigns

Amy Weeks | Peace Studies student

Amy Weeks is a senior Peace Studies and Environmental Studies double major at Manchester University, where she has helped develop campus environmental sustainability initiatives such as recycling and composting programs. She is an environmental and interfaith activist with a focus on community organization.

Session: Using the Human Rights Framework to Create Change on Campus

Zander Willoughby | Peace Studies Coordinator at Manchester University

Zander is the Peace Studies Coordinator at the Manchester University where he studied Political Science and French and minored in Peace Studies. As a student activist, he was involved with the creation of a new Intercultural Center, working for racial justice, and leading a campaign for socially responsible investment.

Session: Using the Human Rights Framework to Create Change on Campus

Laura Yang | AIUSA's Sexual and Reproductive Rights Peer Trainer

Laura joined Amnesty International her freshman year of college and has remained a member since 2015. Her current roles include being a Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRR) Peer Trainer and a member of the National Youth Collective.

Session: Youth Training: Know and Claim Your Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Kevin Zickterman | Local Group Coordinator

Kevin Zickterman is an attorney in the City of Chicago's Law Department and Amnesty's Chicago Local Group Coordinator. He has a BA from Governors State University and a J.D. from Northern Illinois University. He's been deeply involved with human rights education and various local education programs.

Session: Facilitating Human Rights Education Programs on Refugee Crisis at High Schools