

# Amnesty International USA

## Code of Conduct

### Introduction

Amnesty International USA (“AIUSA”) is the United States section of the Amnesty International movement, the largest human rights organization in the world. The AIUSA Board of Directors has adopted this Code of Conduct (the “Code”) for the purpose of protecting the integrity and reputation of AIUSA and its officers, directors, employees, interns, volunteers and volunteer leaders, members and all other participants in the human rights efforts undertaken by or in the name of AIUSA.

The Code applies to, and is to be agreed to in writing by, all persons and organizations associated with AIUSA and its activities, including its officers, directors, employees, interns, volunteers and volunteer leaders, members and all other participants in the human rights efforts undertaken by or in the name of AIUSA (all such individuals are hereinafter referred to as a “Party” or “Parties”).

### Statement of Values

All Parties are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that embodies integrity and respect at all times. The personal conduct of all Parties shall be above reproach in regard to any activity that may reflect upon AIUSA. All Parties are, in particular, required at all times to conduct themselves consistent with core human rights principles including non-discrimination, accessibility, participation and inclusion, respect for diversity and equality between and among all individuals. Any Party whose personal conduct directly reflects discredit upon AIUSA or is not consistent at all times with the foregoing principles shall be subject to such action as deemed appropriate by the AIUSA Board of Directors or appropriately empowered senior staff of AIUSA.

### Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

#### 1. General Overview

The following list sets out some, but not necessarily all, expected standards of conduct for all Parties. Thus, all Parties shall:

- a. Hold paramount the safety, health, integrity and welfare of all persons involved in AIUSA activities.

- b. Act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance personal and professional respect, integrity and the dignity of AIUSA consistent with its mission in advancing and protecting all human rights.
- c. Treat all persons fairly and with dignity and respect.
- d. Treat with respect and consideration all persons, without regard to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status, wealth, income, class, disability, veteran status, citizenship status, education, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.
- e. Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on the emerging issues involving human rights to which any Parties may be devoting their particular work or efforts and to conduct themselves with competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency, effectiveness, respect and kindness.
- f. Respect the structure and responsibilities of AIUSA and of the AIUSA Board of Directors, provide the Board and senior staff of AIUSA with facts and advice as a basis for their making policy decisions, and uphold and implement policies adopted by the Board.
- g. Conduct their actions with positive shared leadership exemplified by open communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion and respect for others, based on a presumption that others participating in AIUSA efforts do so in good faith.
- h. Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, collaboration, inclusion and fortitude in all activities and efforts related to the mission of AIUSA in order to inspire confidence and trust in such activities and efforts.
- i. Respect and protect privileged information to which they have access in the course of their duties.

## 2. Harassment and Discrimination

AIUSA strictly prohibits and will not tolerate harassment or discrimination against any Party on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, wealth, income, class, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, education, genetic information or citizenship status or any other characteristic. Harassment and other forms of discrimination are prohibited at all AIUSA-related events,

including but not limited to meetings, assemblies, civil actions in public or private, convocations or any other gathering, regardless of whether such conduct is illegal under local law in the jurisdiction in which the conduct occurs. Any Party who is subject to harassment or discrimination, or witnesses such behavior, should report it using the AIUSA Complaint Procedure which is part of his Code of Conduct.

“Harassment” includes any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct toward another person that creates an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment, as viewed from the perspective of a reasonable person with the same characteristics as that other person. An aggregation of less serious incidents can constitute harassment, even if one of the incidents considered on its own might not be harassment.

Harassment can be physical, spoken or written, and in-person or through other means, such as email or social media. Prohibited conduct includes harassment that is: verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements, slurs, derogatory comments, or jokes); physical (for example, assault or inappropriate physical contact); visual (for example, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings, or making derogatory gestures); or online or by email (for example, derogatory statements or sexually suggestive postings).

a. Sexual Harassment

All Parties are prohibited from engaging in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment means any harassment based on a person’s sex, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity or expression. It may include a range of subtle or not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender, gender identity or orientation. While incidents of sexual harassment may involve a person in a position of authority above the person being harassed, individuals at any level can be found responsible for engaging in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature. An aggregation of less serious incidents can constitute sexual harassment, even if one of the incidents considered on its own might not be harassing. It includes harassment that is not sexual in nature (for example, offensive remarks about an individual’s sex, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity) as well as sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and that either:

- Is unwelcome, offensive, or creates a hostile environment; or
- Is sufficiently severe or intense such that a reasonable person with the same characteristics as the complaining Party would consider it abusive.

**AIUSA specifically prohibits all Parties from engaging in any of the following in connection with AIUSA-related events:**

- Engaging in unwelcome sexually suggestive physical contact or touching;
- Physical assault of a sexual nature or indecent exposure;
- Making unwelcome sexual or romantic advances toward any Party, including propositions, sexual flirtations, subtle pressure or requests for sexual activities;
- Sexually explicit or offensive epithets or jokes, whether written or oral;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to, inappropriate comments about a Party's physical appearance of a sexually-oriented nature, or inappropriate use of sexually explicit language in discussions or other forms of communication, including email, social media or other online forums;
- Displaying, storing, recording, reproducing, forwarding, transmitting or arranging to receive pornographic, sexually oriented or sexually suggestive images, objects, sound recordings, text, publications or materials at AIUSA-related events, or using AIUSA equipment, facilities or services, including but not limited to AIUSA's various internet and social media platforms, such as its website, Facebook page, and twitter account.

b. Retaliation

No Party shall engage in acts of retaliation, or threats of retaliation, against any individual who, in good faith, reports any suspected discrimination, harassment, or any other violation of this Code. AIUSA strictly prohibits any kind of reprisal, intimidation or retaliation for good faith reporting of suspected violations of this Code, pursuing any claim, cooperating in related investigations, or otherwise opposing conduct in violation of this Code. Any Party who becomes aware of any instance or threat of retaliation in violation of this Code should report the incident using the AIUSA Complaint Procedure.

c. Discipline

Any Party who is found, as a result of an investigation, to have engaged in discrimination, harassment or retaliation in violation of this Code will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from AIUSA positions, suspension or cancellation of membership and disqualification from participation in AIUSA-related activities.

## Complaint Procedure

The following sets out policies and procedure for reporting allegations of violations of the Code and for how those allegations will be investigated and resolved in the event that any informal process for addressing the matter, such as direct communication between the

Parties in interest, the mediation conducted by a third party or any other comparable approach, is unsuccessful or unsuitable. This procedure applies to all Parties excepting, however (a) if a Complaint involves Parties to any collective bargaining agreement between AIUSA and any employees, any applicable provision of that agreement which provides for addressing any particular complaint involving such employee will control over any conflicting provision of the AIUSA Complaint Procedure and/or (b) if any federal, state or local statute applies to disposition of any particular complaint, it will control over any conflicting provision of the AIUSA Complaint Procedure.

### 1. Filing a Complaint

Any Party who is subject to behavior they believe violates this Code, has witnessed such behavior or otherwise has reason to believe that an individual has violated this Code should:

- Promptly complete the [AIUSA Complaint Form](#) (Appendix A) in as much detail as possible; and
- email the completed form to the Chair of the AIUSA Ethics Committee at [ethics@aiusa.org](mailto:ethics@aiusa.org); and
- reference any supporting documentation in your complaint and include it as an attachment when you submit your complaint.

### 2. Complaint Review

- Upon receipt of a complaint, the Ethics Committee Chair shall conduct a brief initial review, determine whether the complaint meets the established criteria for review, and may request additional information from the complainant. The Chair shall then schedule a meeting of the full Ethics Committee for review.
- In its review, the Ethics Committee may also seek additional information from the complainant and/or parties named in the complaint. In doing so, the Ethics Committee shall provide any Party named in the complaint an opportunity to address any matter raised by the complaint including being informed of the identity of the complainant (excepting instances where valid privacy interests of the complainant require that information to be kept confidential).
- Ethics Committee may consider the refusal to provide such information when deciding how to proceed with the complaint.
- During the review process, the Ethics Committee shall not disclose any information to any non-involved party. The Ethics Committee may inform the AIUSA Board of Directors

only that a complaint has been filed and the general status / nature of the Ethics Committee's review of the complaint.

3. Complaint Resolution

Upon completing its review of the complaint, the Ethics Committee shall send a written report to the Board of Directors. The report shall include a copy of the original complaint and the Committee's recommendation(s) for resolution, which may include a recommendation for further, third-party investigation. The Board of Directors shall review the report and recommendation(s) and, within 30 days of its receipt, issue a written decision on the matter. The complaining party and the responding party shall be provided with a relevant summary of the outcome of the investigation.

4. Request for Reconsideration by Ombudsman and by the Board

If either the complaining party or the responding party is not satisfied with the Board's decision, then that party may file a request for reconsideration by the Ombudsman, who shall, within 30 days of receipt of such request, conduct a full de novo review of the entire matter including the prior procedure by which a decision was reached by the Board and thereafter issue a written report and recommendation. If either the complaining party or the responding party is not satisfied with the Ombudsman's decision, then that party may file a request for reconsideration by the Board by emailing the request to the Chair of the Ethics Committee at [ethics@aiusa.org](mailto:ethics@aiusa.org). That request must be filed within thirty days after the Ombudsman sends its decision to the involved parties.

Upon receipt of a request for reconsideration, the Board shall, within thirty days of such receipt, schedule a hearing before the full Board and all relevant parties where the Board shall hear any new information that might cause the Board to reconsider its previous decision or that of the Ombudsman; in the absence of a proffer ten days prior to this hearing of any such new information the Ombudsman's decision shall not be disturbed. At the close of any such hearing, the Board shall decide whether to: (1) uphold its previous decision or, if it differs from the initial decision of the Ombudsman, the decision of the Ombudsman; (2) revise its previous decision or, if it differs from the initial decision of the Ombudsman, the decision of the Ombudsman; or (3) instruct the Ethics Committee to re-open its investigation into the complaint pursuant to whatever guidelines the Board may determine to more fully consider any new evidence that may have been presented subsequent to the Ombudsman's decision, in which

event the Ethics Committee's ultimate determination following such consideration will be final.

## Signature page

By my signature below I certify that I have read and understand the contents of the document entitled AIUSA Code of Conduct, and agree to conform to its tenets at all times when representing or acting on behalf of AIUSA or participating in any AIUSA activity or event.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX A - Ethics Complaint Form

Required Contact Information				
Name (First / Last)		Phone/Cell #		
Amnesty role or affiliation (e.g., local group, country specialist etc.)				
Email Address				
Mailing Address				
City		State	Zip Code	

Complaint Information	
Date(s) of Incident	
Relevant Provision in AIUSA Code of Conduct (if known)	
Subject(s) of Complaint	
Witness(es), if any	
Co-Complainant(s), if any	
Place(s) Incident occurred	
Please describe in detail the nature of your complaint (attach additional sheets if necessary) and note any potential retaliation that you fear could occur as a result of your complaint.	

Actions, if any, previously taken to address the complaint.	
Desired outcome of this complaint process.	
Are you aware of any previous/similar incidents concerning the subject of this complaint?	
Supporting documentation (please list here and attach to this form).	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

When you have completed this form, please submit it along with any relevant supporting documentation to the AIUSA Ethics Committee Chair via email at [ethics@amnestyusa.org](mailto:ethics@amnestyusa.org). However, in those instances where the Ethics Committee Chair is the subject of the complaint, the submission should be directed to the Vice Chair of the Ethics Committee or any other member of the Ethics Committee not identified as a subject of the complaint.

FOR AIUSA USE ONLY	
Date received:	Initial review by:
Date	Action
