

2019 NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE | PROGRAM BOOK

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH

Registration Opens

7:30am

Social Networking & Light Breakfast

8am – 9am

Action Alley & Art Space

8am – 5pm

Action Alley is a forum to learn about and take action on human rights issues and current AIUSA priorities, and a space for groups to creatively display their ideas and accomplishments.

The Art Space is a place to come and put your creative juices to work! We will have canvas and brushes for you to design a banner for the national banner drop action on November 20th, Universal Children's Day, calling on US government agencies and corporations to stop locking up migrant children. Information on this action and materials will be provided. Feel free to drop in throughout the conference to work on your banner to drop in your community. "Artivism" is an effective way to draw attention to human rights concerns.

Welcome: Be Bold, Act Now: Organize for Human Rights

9am – 9:30am

Power Sessions I

9:30am – 10am

Creating a Human Rights Podcast

In this session we will go over the process of creating a podcast, from choosing an event or theme, to inviting guests and uploading shows online. It is a great way to educate, keep people informed and inspire activists.

Event Logistics Planning 101

This session will cover planning and the logistics of an event / action in order to ensure that events will be the most successful possible. This session covers how to plan out the logistics for a direct action, organized in the community grassroots setting. It will also touch upon base building org

How to Join Write for Rights to Change Lives and Make New Friends

Write for Rights is our annual letter writing campaign on ten important human rights cases. This year's cases are all youth activists facing abuses. Find out how you can take part and organize fun letter writing events that will help the cases, grow your network and make new friends.

Lobbying & The National Defense Authorization Act

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is the major piece of legislation passed by Congress every year that funds the Department of Defense and its activities. For 2020, Congress has agreed in the NDAA to authorize \$733 billion for military spending around the world. Because it's such an important bill, Congress passes it every year, offering activists opportunities to try to influence what the military spends its money on, including things that affect human rights. In 2020, for example, Amnesty International lobbied Congress to include provisions in the bill that would require it to improve its investigations and compensation of civilian casualties caused by US military actions, help prevent civilian harm, and prevent the transfer of any more prisoners to the detention center at Guantanamo Bay. This session will explain what the NDAA is, how it gets drafted and passed, and how to lobby representatives in Congress to influence what the US military is actually doing.

Welcome to Amnesty!

Amnesty International is a global human rights movement, but what does this really mean? What does this movement look like? And where is this movement going? In this workshop participants will learn the fundamental framework that shapes the strategy and policies that guide Amnesty International. This workshop is for everyone! It has been designed to provide a little bit of history, a little bit of opportunity, and a lot of room for getting involved in working for human rights!

“Why Amnesty?” Answering the member recruitment/retention question

Member recruitment and retention tips have their place, but building maintaining group membership is about authentically offering the action opportunity and community with meaning for them. The session is a facilitated Q&A that asks participants to think about why they joined and why they stay.

Power Sessions II

10:30am – 11am

Bridging the gap between sides

One of the common challenges when engaging in productive conversations is that the opposing side doesn't accept the argument. This breakout session will educate people on how to respond to opposing arguments to ensure productive conversation where both sides exit with more comprehension of the issue

Building a Strategy to Win: Using the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

The Midwest Academy Strategy Chart is considered a gold standard in the field for strategic campaign planning. Whether you're a new organizer or looking to brush up and expand your skills, this power session will give you a solid foundation on analyzing power and organizing effectively.

Elections 2020: Walking the line of nonpartisanship

The 2020 election year will present many challenges and opportunities for Amnesty activists. This session will provide tools for staying informed and nonpartisan because human rights shouldn't be politicized.

Radical Welcome

Everyone who walks into your meeting has something that will help your group reach their goals. Learn about developing a group practice that keeps your new members coming back, and current members engaged in making connections that will bring out the best in those new members.

Ways to use Country and Thematic Specialists in your Human Rights Work

This session will provide information on ways to use Country and Thematic Specialists in your human rights work.

Writing an Effective Letter to Help a Case

Participants will be introduced to the fundamental pieces of an appeal letter to help an individual case, modeled on an Urgent Action sample letter. We will then practice writing our own appeal letters on a case. The skills learned during this session can be used to promote short term and long term campaigning on cases.

Human Rights Discussion Groups

11:15am – 12pm

Decriminalization and the Rights of Sex Workers: Steps Forward for Advocacy

This Human Rights Discussion Group Session will draw on conference themes by empowering activists with knowledge about current national and state policy relating to the rights of sex workers. The session will include local activists, and the discussion will center around the recent SEXTA/FOSTA acts.

Outsourcing Responsibility: Holding the Defense Sector responsible for Human Rights Violations

We will give an overview of Military, Security and Policing and Business and Human Rights campaigns (from Hong Kong to extractive industries) and focus in on "Outsourcing Responsibility" campaign targeting governments and weapons producers involved in the sale of weapons to human rights abusers and how you can take action.

The Climate Crisis & Human Survival: What Can We Do?

In this session, we will discuss the scope of the climate crisis (how bad it is now, how bad it could get and how it impacts human rights); what Amnesty's solutions are; and your creative ideas for how we can best campaign to protect our planet.

The Endless US “War on Terror” – its costs, its impact, and how to help stop it.

The United States has been at war for more than 18 years – ever since the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, DC. Many Americans pay little attention to this ongoing & expanding armed conflict around the world, because that war isn't happening on US soil. But it does involve US servicemembers, and the US government has killed hundreds of thousands of civilians around the world in our name, spending nearly \$6 trillion in the process. It's also tortured detainees, and continues to detain 40 men indefinitely on an offshore US military base in Cuba, most without charge or trial. Meanwhile, the threat from non-state armed groups has only grown and spread to more countries. This discussion will summarize the status of the US military's so-called “Global War on Terror,” will explain the human rights violations it has caused, and will brainstorm ideas for how to create a groundswell of opposition to this endless war that will influence the US government – including Congress, the Trump administration, and our next president, whoever that may be.

What to do! The Trump Administration has plans to resuscitate the federal death penalty

The US government has announced its plans to resume federal executions for the first time since 2003, and 5 prisoners are scheduled for lethal injection during a 30 day period starting this December. Join a conversation on what can be done to stop these killings in our name.

What would Eleanor Roosevelt say? Are human rights still universal and indivisible?

In July, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced a new Commission on Unalienable Rights, which purports to distinguish between the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and what it describes as “ad hoc rights” articulated in subsequent years.

"Who Made this Flying Bus?" Migration in Nepal through Popular Music

Exploring contemporary popular music in Nepal that addresses the cause and impact of rural-urban and international migration. This session will also integrate a look into art as a mode of uplifting local narratives of struggle, resistance and organizing.

Lunch

12pm – 1pm

Poster Presentations (in presentation order)

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Inclusive Organizing to increase impact

The focus is on applying inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) in our organizing and activism. As a diverse movement that fights for the human rights of everyone, we have to make sure we walk the talk in the work we do and the way we work together to accomplish our goal.

Justice in the Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR) has suffered from civil war since 2013. This talk will examine how both the government and armed rebel groups often have violated human rights as well as the growing role of China and Russia in CAR politics. This talk will also provide actions to promote support for the UN's peacekeeping mission in CAR as well as pressure the CAR government to not sacrifice human rights in peace negotiations with rebel groups.

People and Policies, Stories and Statistics: Engaging our neighbors in action

This presentation makes the case that we need to be placing the power of people and their stories at the center of our activism. It was sparked by a New York magazine article about Trump supporters in Arkansas and Missouri supporting an undocumented immigrant who had to seek sanctuary.

Looking for a Resource and an Inspiration? Meet Grassroots Leaders who are Making an Impact for Human Rights

This session will highlight the many ways in which our member leaders are making human rights impact. Questions that will be answered: Who are the member leaders within the Member Leadership & Training (MLT) unit? How can I connect with member leaders as resources? What are some success stories?

Celebrating Urgent Action Network and Case Commitment Victories

Come see how you and our global movement have contributed to case successes throughout the years, including the release of prisoners of conscience and better conditions for human rights defenders. Participants will learn how they can engage with cases and lend their voices to future successes.

Innovation at AIUSA: What it looks like now, where it's going, and how you can be part of it.

Join the Innovation Lab for this brief presentation to learn about how AIUSA has innovated for human rights in the past, how we plan to do it in the future, and how you can take part. We are accepting proposals for innovative ideas that will help us reach more members, take more actions, and have more impact.

Breakout Sessions

1:45pm – 2:45pm

Activism and Sport: Organizing around International Events

Bahrain hosts a Formula 1 Grand Prix every spring, presenting an opportunity for creative organizing. Participants will brainstorm and develop ideas for campaigning around the 2020 Grand Prix.

Addressing human rights violations in your community

Local Group 151, Boston has been working on a human rights issue in the Boston area for 9-10 months. We will discuss the process we used, how to organize a campaign, and how we worked to get Amnesty to take a position on the issue.

Art and Poetry Competition Against Enforced Disappearances

Victims of enforced disappearance are people who have literally disappeared; from their loved ones & their community. Victims are often never released & their fate remains unknown. Join our art competition to spread awareness of enforced disappearances around the globe with an emphasis on Sri Lanka.

Gun Violence Prevention: the Evolution of a Coalition

Activism around gun violence has long been associated with preventing mass shootings. But the majority of gun deaths look very different from what we see in the news. This workshop will describe what one state coalition is doing to be more centered in communities most impacted by daily gun violence.

Stand Up, Fight Back! Stop the US Government and Corporations from Locking Up Children

The detention of migrant children is a stark reminder of our nation's hypocrisy in what it strives to stand for – a pillar of welcome and freedom – and what's actually happening – the cruel persecution of kids simply for seeking safety here. Join us for an interactive discussion and action fighting back against the Administration's hateful attacks & rhetoric, and getting corporations out of the business of detaining kids for profit.

Strategic and Creative Campaigning

The cases and campaigns Amnesty groups adopt rarely end quickly. Individual tactics/actions become impactful when they are part of a strategy with a longer timeframe. This breakout helps groups creatively ideate tactics while thinking “beyond the tactic” to develop campaigning strategies.

State Lobbying 101

Federal lobbying is extremely important to the work of Amnesty International USA. Many times we forget the importance of advocacy in our own backyards that assist in the preservation of human rights and safety. This workshop will focus on some key specifics in state lobbying and its importance.

The Crisis in Yemen & US Arms Sales: Where things stand and how you can help

AIUSA arms sales, researchers, and advocacy experts lead a discussion with panelists and members of the audience on the importance of banning arms sales to the Saudi-UAE led coalition involved in Yemen, along with the major human rights issues affecting the Arabian peninsula. Learn how pressure from Amnesty has swayed Congress to act and what else can be done in the coming months.

Youth Refugees Discussing Human Rights

A panel of youth refugees will relate their experiences and highlight the human rights issues that they have faced. They will connect their experiences to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to current campaigns and ways that high school and college AI student groups can take action.

Youth Training: Know and Claim Your Sexual and Reproductive Rights

When our rights are under attack, what do we do? Stand up- fight back! In this workshop, youth (14-24 yrs) will join together to learn from a peer trainer and each other about their sexual and reproductive rights and plan how they can defend against the increasing attacks against their rights.

Community Caucuses

3pm – 4pm

Local Group Caucus

Local Groups have been at the heart of Amnesty activism since the movement was born. The commitment, dedication, and creativity of Local Group members meeting consistently every month has led to the release of thousands of prisoners of conscience, changes in law and policy, and transformative moments in peoples' lives. Join others whose commitment to human rights runs as deeply as yours.

Youth Caucus

Young people have been at the heart of Amnesty activism since the movement was born nearly 60 years ago - and continue to be at the forefront of change! From high school halls to the halls of power, from dorm rooms to boardrooms, and from classrooms to community centers, youth leaders are lifting their voices to demand a world where everyone's human rights are respected. The Youth Caucus is the space for young people to come together to share challenges, brainstorm ideas for action, and learn more about Amnesty and running effective chapters. Come caucus with your peers, get one-on-one support for your group, and help shape the future of the organization. Note: We value and respect our faculty advisors, educators and other adults allies in their work with young people, but hope to have this space for youth and students to connect directly with one another.

Activists Recognition & Keynote

4:15pm – 5pm

Keynote Speaker: Alejandra Barrera

Voting Plenary

5pm – 6:30pm

Closing Action: Candle Light Vigil Reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

6:30pm