

2019 WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE | PROGRAM BOOK

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH

Registration Opens

7:30am

Social Networking & Coffee

8am – 9am

Action Alley & Art Space

8am – 6pm

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

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.

Building Pressure to Build a Longer Table

Refugee & Immigrant Rights is one of the most pressing issues in the USA. Many groups want to take action on this campaign but tend to struggle with organizing strategies. This session will focus on how to use tools like the media, tactics, etc., to effectively organize in support of their community.

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: How to Influence Defense Spending to Protect Human Rights

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.

Member Leader Map: Finding and collaborating with your colleagues

The interactive Member Leader Locations Map will be demonstrated. It shows all SAC, AC, ACSC, NYAC, YoCo, Trainers, Board, SDPACs, LCs, Student Groups, Local Groups. (This is a session for AIUSA members only.)

Welcome to Amnesty!

Are you a new Amnesty member? Are you wondering how to navigate this regional conference? Join our chat of "who's who" and learn about the structure of AIUSA and how and where exactly you fit into it, as well as a 30 second overview of each of the priority campaigns.

Power Sessions II

10:15am – 10:45am

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.

Lobbying for Human Rights: Telling Stories and Building Relationships

This session will include lobbying basics and will emphasize the use of storytelling and relationship building as part of successful lobbying. Areas covered will include putting together a delegation, setting up the appointment, preparing to talk about the issues, the meeting itself and follow up.

Tactics and Escalation

Learn how to execute diverse, creative, and strong tactics to build power, build leaders, and apply escalating pressure as part of broader strategies to make lasting change.

Using Power Mapping for Your Organizing

To create the change we seek, we need to understand the power structures at play. A power map is a strategic tool that, properly done, can reveal power dynamics and leverage relationships and networks.

What you can do to end gun violence

A in depth conversation about ending gun violence and real practical next steps of what each person can do on the EGV campaign.

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.

Breakout Sessions I

11am – 12pm

Artivism: The Power of Creative Campaigning

Art is one of the boldest forms of enacting effective change. In utilization of that principle, this breakout session will focus on the use of poetry (e.g. slam), sketches, posters, and visual aids in campaigning for prevalent issues to provide a creative outlet for activism. The main campaigns discussed will include the End Gun Violence Campaign, Refugee/Migrant Rights Campaign, climate change, rape kits for native indigenous/Alaska native women, and the death penalty, among others.

Human Rights in a surveillance society

An examination and discussion of the right of citizens not to be tracked, with a special focus on facial recognition technology, and how it fits into our Security and Human Rights Campaign.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is the method by which AIUSA Board, staff, and member leaders guide our work. There appears to be a consensus that we can do better, including show more respect and trust, be more inclusive, communicate more clearly, resolve conflicts compassionately, and have clearer guidelines about decision-making and accountability. We will discuss the current status of this initiative, including the interim Code of Conduct, and brainstorm ways to move it forward.

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 and rhetoric; and getting corporations out of the business of detaining kids for profit.

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.

Poster Presentations (in presentation order)

12:15pm – 12:45pm

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.

Celebrating Urgent Action Network and Case Commitment Victories

Come see how you and our global movement has 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.

Burundi's Abacu [Our People] Campaign: Justice for Germain Rukuki and Other Victims and Families

Amnesty International's Abacu [Our People] Campaign seeks justice for victims of human rights abuses in Burundi. This proposal will highlight the case of Germain Rukuki unjustly sentenced to 32 years, individuals profiled in the campaign, and actions for advocacy and organizing in communities.

Lunch

12:30pm – 2pm

Poster Presentations (in presentation order)

1:30pm – 2pm

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

This presentation will highlight the many ways in which our member leaders are making an impact for human rights. 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?

What to Do?! The Administration's Plans to Resuscitate the Federal Machinery of Death

In July the US Department of Justice announced plans to resume federal executions for the first time since 2003. Whether a state has the death penalty or not or a moratorium on executions, these plans affect all of us. It is state killing in our name. All members must advocate and organize to stop these executions. Join us to learn how to stop these federal killings in our name.

Your Actions Change Lives: Write for Rights Victories You Helped Make Possible

Celebrate the people you have helped by writing letters during Write for Rights, our largest annual global campaign - people like Phyo Phye Aung, a youth activist and prisoner of conscience who was freed from prison in Myanmar.

Community Caucuses

2:15pm – 3:15pm

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 & Student 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.

Human Rights Discussion Groups I

3:30pm – 4:15pm

Getting involved in implementing Washington state's new law on police use of force

In November of 2018 Washington state passed a new law to bring further accountability to police use of force. Hear from an activist leading the implementation process and Amnesty's policing lead on why and how you can get involved in implementing policing practices that respect human rights.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: mobilizing for progress!

The US has done little to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. In this session, Indigenous activists will discuss their road to victory in Washington State, which passed legislation in April to address MMIWG; participants will learn what they can do to address this crisis in their state.

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.

Up Close and Personal with Urgent Action Case 206.17

An examination of the background and circumstances of Urgent Action 206.17 and its progress to date. A brief description of the Urgent Action Network will be followed by a discussion by Aayah Khalaf, who is the daughter of Ola al-Qaradawi and Hosam Khalaf, unjustly imprisoned in Egypt for 2+ years.

Venezuelan Human Rights Crisis

The Venezuelan refugee crisis is second in size only to Syria. It is the largest ever forced displacement on our doorstep in the Americas. In this session, we'll talk about how the human rights crisis has led to record levels of displacement and what Amnesty members can do to help.

Be Bold Act Now: Organize for Human Rights (Activists Recognition & Keynote)

4:30pm – 5:15pm

Keynote Speaker: Dhondup Wangchen

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

Coffee/Pastries

8:30am – 9am

Human Rights Discussion Groups II

9am – 9:45am

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 U.S. 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 Administration's Plans to Resuscitate the Federal Machinery of Death

In July the US Department of Justice announced plans to resume federal executions for the first time since 2003. 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.

Breakout Sessions II

10am – 11am

Art and Poetry Competition Against Enforced Disappearances

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

Building a Better Resolution Process

The National Resolutions Committee (NRC) will host breakout sessions to engage members in a robust, interactive discussion of our Membership Resolutions Process, and the role it plays (or should play) in making AIUSA a truly democratic organization based on shared leadership.

Interested in Human Rights Education? Let's Talk!

What does human rights education mean and what could it look like at Amnesty International USA? Bring your ideas and help shape human rights education at Amnesty!

Sponsoring a Refugee Family: Implementing the Longer Table Initiative

Three groups in the Western Region briefly describe their very different experiences sponsoring refugee or asylum-seeking families and lead a discussion about the challenges and successes as well as inspirations and pitfalls along the way.

Voting Plenary

11am – 12:30pm

Closing Action

12:30pm – 1pm