

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2020 SPEAKER BIOS

Please note that contact information has been listed only for speakers who have indicated that this could be shared publicly.

Adem Carroll

Adem Carroll is NY and United Nations Program Director for Justice for All, focusing on mass displacement, trafficking, xenophobia and genocide prevention with programs on the Uyghur Repression, the Kashmiri Lockdown and the Rohingya Persecution in Burma. In the 1990s, Adem was Country Specialist for the Maghreb Co-Group, while working at three AmeriCorps national service programs. For five years after 9/11, Adem played a leadership role in the NYC Muslim community.

Session: Dark Side of Global Connection: Confronting U.S. Complicity in Torture and Repression

Akriti Panthi

Akriti Panthi (she/her/hers) serves as the Midwestern Representative on AIUSA Nomination Committee and has been a long-time member of AIUSA. She has lobbied public officials and coordinated campaigns around enforced disappearances, gun violence, the school to prison pipeline, corporate social accountability, and refugee rights.

Session: Standing with Human Rights Defenders in Sri Lanka

Alejandro Del Pino

Alejandro Del Pino (He/Him/His) is an Amnesty Member at Florida State University. He is also a first-year member of the National Youth Collective, a leadership body for engaging young people in all aspects of Amnesty. He is a lover of the environment and an extremely passionate and outspoken individual when it comes to minorities and their rights.

Session: The Climate Crisis and Human Survival: What Can We Do?

Alice Dahle

Contact: adahle48@gmail.com

Alice Dahle is a 37-year member of AIUSA and chairs the Women's Human Rights Co-group. She coordinated the Stop Violence Against Women campaign in Iowa and represented AIUSA at the International Women's Human Rights Network conference in Marakesh. An active campaigner for U.S. ratification of the UN Women's Treaty (CEDAW), she serves as legislative advocate for several organizations.

Session: Not someone else's problem: Lobbying for women's rights in Afghanistan



Alicia Koutsoulieris

Contact: Alicia@AmnestyOrlando.org, Twitter: @IOTPA, Instagram: Amnesty_Israel_Palestine, YouTube: Amnesty International USA Israel/OPT/Palestine

Alicia Koutsoulieris (she/her/hers) is the Group Coordinator for the local group in Orlando, FL. She is an Area Coordinator and is part of the AC Steering Committee. She has served as the Case Coordinator for the Israel/OPT/State of Palestine since 2014. Her first trip to Palestine was in 2016 with the Interfaith Peach Builders delegation. Alicia completed her undergraduate work at UCF in Political Science & History and is working on her Masters in Political Science, also at UCF.

Session: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Detention and Trauma of Children

Alison McQuade

Alison McQuade is the Social Media Manager at AIUSA. She has spent the last 15 years doing digital communications for political, nonprofit, advocacy, and media organizations. Her preferred method of communication is gif, pronounced with a hard G.

Session: Social Media and Activism

Andrew Fandino

Andrew Fandino is the Senior Program Officer for the Individuals at Risk Program at Amnesty International USA. He brings with him over 20 years of human rights advocacy experience with a strong focus on human rights defenders. He has a Master's Degree from American University in International Affairs with a Specialization in Human Rights in Latin America.

Session: Under Siege: The persecution of human rights defenders around the world and what you can do to support them!

Antonio Martinez, Ph.D.

Antonio Martinez, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist who has collaborated with AIUSA on key visits to Mexico for two cases of former POCs. He co-founded the Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture, has traveled to support the development and training of similar centers in Central America and Tibet, and had provided training to U.S. Border Patrol officers and political asylum officers. His expertise on the effects of torture will focus on the long term effects that family separation has had on migrant children and families.

Session: Build Bridges – Not Walls, Not Jails: Taking Action and Mobilizing in Your Communities to Fight to Protect the Rights of Children Seeking Safety

Aydin Anwar

Contact: Twitter: @aydinanwar_

Aydin Anwar is an Uyghur-American activist currently assisting Sound Vision's Save Uyghur campaign based in Chicago. She had spent much of her high school and college years focused on raising awareness on the plight of East Turkestan. Her most notable piece is a video explainer on Now This, receiving over 100 million views worldwide. Aydin holds a BA from Duke University in International Comparative Studies.

Session: Dark Side of Global Connection: Confronting U.S. Complicity in Torture and Repression



Baaqeyah Muhammad El

Contact: baaqeyahb@gmail.com, Twitter: @baaqeyah

Baaqeyah Muhammad El (she/her) has participated in Amnesty in a number of different roles, including as a member of the Youth Collective and the president of her student group. She currently serves as a Student Activism Coordinator for Pennsylvania and as a member of the Nominating Committee.

Session: Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA

Basel Moussly

Contact: bmoussly@lirs.org

Basel Moussly is the Program Manager for Migrant Services at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). In this role, he oversees services provided nationally to migrants and asylum seekers around the country, including services at the border with Mexico. Prior to working with LIRS, Basel was the Refugee Resettlement Supervisor at Refugee Services of Texas, and he has over eight years of experience in serving refugees and displaced populations domestically and internationally. Basel himself is an asylum seeker who came to the U.S. about five years ago from Syria.

Session: Campaign Plenary – All people deserve safety and freedom: The path forward in the fight for refugee rights

Benya Kraus

Benya Kraus (she/her) is a member on the AIUSA Board of Directors and has been involved as an Amnesty activist since age 14 with AI Thailand. She is co-founder of the national nonprofit, Lead for America, which ensures that dynamic and diverse leaders are working on communities' toughest challenges.

Session: Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA

Brad Parker

Contact: Twitter: @baparkr

Brad Parker serves as the senior advocacy director for Defense of Children – Palestine, specializing in the detention of Palestinian children by Israel. He works closely with congressional offices, including with Rep. Betty McCollum's office that wrote HR2407, the "Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Military Occupation Act."

Session: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Detention and Trauma of Children

Cepheus "Uncle Bobby" Johnson

Contact: unclebobbyx@gmail.com, Twitter: @unclebobbyx, Instagram: unalebobbyx

Cephus X Johnson, Uncle Bobby X is a social justice activist at the forefront of ending police violence in America. After his nephew, Oscar Grant was murdered by a Bart police officer in 2009, Cephus founded two social justice organizations, the Oscar Grant Foundation and Love Not Blood Campaign.

Session: Killing in our Name in the USA



Charanya Krishnaswami

Charanya Krishnaswami directs AIUSA's U.S. advocacy related to human rights in the Americas, including the rights of asylum-seekers at the Mexico/U.S. border. Previously, she worked in refugee protection at the UN Refugee Agency, as an attorney for child asylum-seekers and for adults in detention, and as a federal appellate law clerk in California. She graduated from Yale Law School.

Session: Build Bridges – Not Walls, Not Jails: Taking Action and Mobilizing in Your Communities to Fight to Protect the Rights of Children Seeking Safety

Charlene D'Cruz

Contact: charlene@l4gg.org

Charlene D'Cruz is an immigration attorney with the Lawyers for Good Government who directs legal services in the Matamoros tent camp to help asylum seekers in Mexico. She can speak to the situation asylum seekers face below the border and opportunities to support them.

Session: Build Bridges – Not Walls, Not Jails: Taking Action and Mobilizing in Your Communities to Fight to Protect the Rights of Children Seeking Safety

Daniel Balson

Daniel Balson is Advocacy Director for Europe and Central Asia for Amnesty International USA. Daniel works with U.S. government representatives in Congress and the Executive Branch to ensure that human rights across Eurasia are prioritized and protected. Prior to AIUSA, Daniel worked at Accion International protecting microfinance clients entering the formal financial sector across Eurasia and at the National Democratic Institution supporting civil society and governance development across Central Asia. Daniel speaks fluent Russian and Spanish and conversational Arabic and Hebrew.

Session: Not someone else's problem: Lobbying for women's rights in Afghanistan

Daphne Eviatar

Daphne Eviatar directs AIUSA's work on U.S. national security policy and its impact on human rights.

Session: New Tech & the Forever War: the threat to Human Rights

David Kerr

David Kerr has worked closely with the AIUSA Israel/OPT/Palestine team over the past year, aiding in research, graphic design and conference implementation. He participated in an inter-faith delegation to Israel/OPT/Palestine with a specific focus on the detention of Palestinian children by Israeli security forces in 2016 which examined the unique situation where Israel automatically funnels children into an inherently unfair military judicial system.

Session: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Detention and Trauma of Children



Denise Bell

Denise Bell is a researcher on refugee and migrant rights at AIUSA, where she has authored reports following missions she's led in the U.S. and the Middle East. She has also served as senior campaigner for refugee and migrant rights, campaigner for the Darfur campaign, and country specialist for Sudan. She was previously with the U.S. Dept. of Justice as an Attorney Advisor on the NY Immigration Court and has worked on forced displacement issues since the mid-1990s.

Session: Build Bridges – Not Walls, Not Jails: Taking Action and Mobilizing in Your Communities to Fight to Protect the Rights of Children Seeking Safety

Session: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Detention and Trauma of Children

Session: Separation, Detention, and Deportation: How U.S. Immigration Policies Threaten Access to Healthcare

Session: Campaign Plenary – All people deserve safety and freedom: The path forward in the fight for refugee rights

Danisha Jenkins

Contact: danishi@uci.edu

Danisha Jenkins, representative of Physicians for Human Rights, is the Director of Critical Care and Emergency Services at the hospital closest to the border and a PhD Nursing Science Student at UC Irvine. She is investigating the interactions between law enforcement and nurses and how it impacts ethical care delivery.

Session: Separation, Detention, and Deportation: How U.S. Immigration Policies Threaten Access to Healthcare

Diego Zavala

Contact: dzavala@aiusacs.org

Diego Zavala has been a member of AIUSA for 38 years and serves as AIUSA's Mexico country specialists for more than 25 years. He was a Board member for 11 years, participated in three ICMs and two official AI missions to Mexico. He is a professor of epidemiology and has linked his public health work on violence prevention to HR advocacy. Diego has participated in humanitarian response after the earthquake in Haiti and after hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico as a volunteer of the American Red Cross.

Session: Build Bridges – Not Walls, Not Jails: Taking Action and Mobilizing in Your Communities to Fight to Protect the Rights of Children Seeking Safety

Dr. Nicole Novak

Dr. Nicole Novak is a social epidemiologist and community health researcher who's been engaged in extensive health equity work. She has particular interests in reproductive and perinatal health and has been working with the Sterilization and Social Justice Lab, which has worked on legislation surrounding compensation for human rights abuses suffered by victims of California's Eugenic Sterilization Program.

Session: Women's Rights are Human Rights



Edie Garwood

Edie Garwood is the Country Specialist on Israel/OPT/Palestine and a Member Empowerment Trainer for Amnesty International USA. She started a student group in 1984 and has been recognized for her human rights work over the last three decades. She spent August 2019 volunteering in the Amnesty office in Ramallah, Palestine.

Session: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Detention and Trauma of Children

Ernest Coverson

Bio TBD.

Session: Making an Ending Gun Violence (EGV) Impact in Real Time

Session: Campaign Plenary – Ending Gun Violence

Frank Prochaska

Frank Prochaska has spent over 32 years in the labor movement working for social justice in the workplace as an advocate, organizer, and lobbyist, with the last 21 years as full time staff. Lobbying experience includes local level, legislatures in two states, and Federal lobbying. He currently serves as a Legislative Coordinator for Washington.

Session: Youth, Power, Action! Strategy, Tactics and Planning for Amnesty's National Week of Student Action

Gavrilah Wells

Contact: gavrilah@aivol.org, Twitter: @JGavrilah, @AmnestySF30

Gavrilah Wells is the coordinator for Group 30, San Francisco. Raised by an Amnesty volunteer-activist-poet mom (Group 57), she learned early on about everyday activism and the power of calling out injustice. In 1985 she recognized the impact of letter writing firsthand when she met former POC, Boris Mukametshin, at a gathering in her own backyard.

Session: Under Siege: The persecution of human rights defenders around the world and what you can do to support them!

Janet Lord

Janet Lord is currently serving as senior research associate at the Harvard Law School Project on Disability and holds part-time teaching appointments at the University of Maryland, Carey School of Law; American University, Washington College of Law; and

National University of Ireland (Galway). Earlier in her career, she worked on the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, focusing on landmine survivor rights in mine-affected countries and serving as legal counsel to NGOs and lead governments in the negotiation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As part of her human rights law practice, she has worked with grassroots disabled peoples organizations in more than 30 countries around the world to advance disability rights.

Session: Official Opening of AGM



Jewher Ilham

Contact: Instagram: Jewherrr, Twitter: Jewher.ilham

Jewher Ilham is the daughter of Uyghur academic Ilham Tohti, who is serving a life term for "separatism." She recently graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Political Science, Arabic, and Central Eurasian Studies, is assisting on a documentary film about Uyghurs, and continuing her advocacy on behalf of her father.

Session: Chinese State Surveillance and "National Security" in Xinjiang

Jim McDonald

Contact: jmcdonald@aiusacs.org; Twitter: @jmccdon; Instagram: jim.mcdonald549

Jim McDonald is the Sri Lanka Country Specialist for AIUSA. He has testified before Congress on Sri Lanka and has led numerous campaigns on Sri Lanka (including Sri Lanka demonstrations for Group 133's "Get on the Bus" event). He has organized screenings of documentaries about war crimes in Sri Lanka.

Session: Standing with Human Rights Defenders in Sri Lanka

Jonathan Fantini-Porter

Contact: jonpor@post.harvard.edu

Jonathan Fantini Porter is public-sector executive with experience in the U.S. Congress and White House. A graduate of Harvard and Georgetown University, he serves as an associate fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and on the advisory board for the U.S. office of the United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR).

Session: The Impact of an Amnesty International Volunteer: From Buenos Aires to the Halls of the U.S. Congress

Kaitlyn O'Shaughnessy

Kaitlyn O'Shaughnessy is a human rights attorney based in Washington, DC. She volunteers as a member of Amnesty International USA's women's human rights coordination group. In that role, she focuses her efforts on the protection of women's human rights defenders, the rights of migrant women, and ending violence against women.

Session: Under Siege: The persecution of human rights defenders around the world and what you can do to support them!

Kanya Bennett

Kanya Bennett is a Senior Legislative Counsel with the ACLU and advances criminal justice reform before the federal government. Previously, Kanya worked with the American Constitution Society and U.S. House Judiciary Committee. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois and University of North Carolina School of Law.

Session: Killing in our Name in the USA



Kate Clark

Kate Clark is the Senior Director of Immigration Services at Jewish Family Service of San Diego. She is an Immigration Attorney who has been practicing in San Diego since 2010. Ms. Clark is a founding member of the San Diego Rapid Response Network and sits on the SDRRN Steering Committee.

Session: Separation, Detention, and Deportation: How U.S. Immigration Policies Threaten Access to Healthcare

Keely Linton

Keely Linton is an Iipay & Cupeno citizen from the Mesa Grande Band, the Executive Director for the Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, and Chairperson for Intertribal Court of Southern California. She worked with Family Violence Prevention Center, in collaboration with San Diego County Sheriff's and Attorney's office.

Session: End rape and violence against Native women and girls

Kelly Johnson

Kelly Johnson is currently a Junior at Wilmington College in South West Ohio. They are studying Social Justice Advocacy and are minoring in Race, Gender, Ethnicity and Peace Studies. Kelly is currently serving as her local student group's President and as an Amnesty International Midwest Sexual and Reproductive Rights Peer Trainer.

Session: Women's Rights are Human Rights

Krissy Roth

Kristina Roth oversees AIUSA's Criminal Justice Programs, working to abolish the death penalty and stop unlawful killings by police. She serves as AIUSA's expert on these matters and works with Amnesty activists, impacted communities, elected officials and other top stakeholders to put an end to these urgent human rights abuses.

Session: Killing in our Name in the USA

Laura Galeano

Laura Galeano started with AIUSA as an intern with the Individuals at Risk Program while finishing her Master's Degree at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She currently leads the organization's Urgent Action Network and Case Commitment Initiative.

Session: Under Siege: The persecution of human rights defenders around the world and what you can do to support them!

Lora Randa

Lora Randa (she/her) is a college freshman from Minnesota, who began her Amnesty involvement 4 years ago as Student Group Coordinator for her high school's AI chapter. She is now a member of AIUSA's Youth Collective.

Session: Separation, Detention, and Deportation: How U.S. Immigration Policies Threaten Access to Healthcare

Session: Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA



Margaret Huang

Margaret Huang, an advocate for human rights and racial justice for more than two decades, is the Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. As the chief executive officer, Ms. Huang is responsible for advancing the vision and mission of the organization, managing the organization's day-to-day operations and activities, serving as the lead spokesperson for the organization, and ensuring the organization's financial health. She has worked with Members of Congress on critical pieces of legislation, and she has advocated before the United Nations human rights mechanisms as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Session: Welcoming Remarks

Maria Solano Arauz

Contact: maria.sol.wa@gmail.com, Twitter: @maria_sol1419, @amnesty.wa

(She/her/hers) Maria moved to Washington four years ago from Nicaragua. She is a senior at Shorewood High School and has been involved in Amnesty since her freshman year. She is the current Washington State Student Activist Coordinator. She is most passionate about Refugee & Migrant Rights, Gun Violence, and Climate Justice.

Session: Youth, Power, Action! Strategy, Tactics and Planning for Amnesty's National Week of Student Action

Mary-Evelyn (Mev) Porter

Mary-Evelyn Porter, a retired educator, writes for the RomaRising project. She became an Amnesty International volunteer in the late 1970s and traveled to Argentina to meet human rights leaders. She has also worked on migration and undocumented migrants with human rights groups on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

Session: The Impact of an Amnesty International Volunteer: From Buenos Aires to the Halls of the U.S. Congress

Michael Kleinman

Michael Kleinman is Director of Amnesty's Silicon Valley Initiative. Previously, he was the founder and CEO of Orange Door Research, which helped partners including UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Bank conduct large-scale surveys in challenging environments. His writing on development and human rights has been published in Vox, The Guardian, Stanford Social Innovation Review, San Francisco Chronicle and the LA Times. He is a graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School.

Session: Dark Side of Global Connection: Confronting U.S. Complicity in Torture and Repression

Mona Cadena

Contact: Twitter: @MonaCadena

As Senior Director of Campaigns and Organizing at EJUSA, Mona Cadena works with strategists on death penalty repeal and violence reduction campaigns across the country. Mona provides training, strategic guidance, and hands-on assistance to over a dozen state abolition campaigns. Before joining EJUSA Mona spent 10 years organizing with AIUSA.

Session: Killing in our Name in the USA



Nestor Fantini

Contact: nfantini@aol.com

Nestor Fantini, a professor of sociology at Rio Hondo College in California, is an Argentine-born American educator, author, and community leader who was adopted by Amnesty International as a Prisoner of Conscience during the Argentine military dictatorship of the 1970s. Currently, he is a member of AI Group 92.

Session: The Impact of an Amnesty International Volunteer: From Buenos Aires to the Halls of the U.S. Congress

Pam Kingfisher

Contact: Kingfisherpj@gmail.com

Pam Kingfisher (Cherokee) has successfully advocated for Emergency Contraception for Native women, policy implementation and trained many tribal communities about sexual assault and sex trafficking. She lives in Oklahoma.

Session: End rape and violence against Native women and girls

Penelope Halkiadakis

Penelope Halkiadakis (she/her) is a Student Activist Coordinator and a member of the Youth Collective. In her seven years at AIUSA, she has organized for human rights from New Jersey classrooms as a student group coordinator to Morocco as the AIUSA Youth Delegate to the 2019 International Youth Camp.

Session: Separation, Detention, and Deportation: How U.S. Immigration Policies Threaten Access to Healthcare

Session: Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA

Rebecca Ma

Rebecca Ma is an AIUSA Campaigner for “I Welcome” and drives cross-departmental campaigns for refugee and migrant rights. 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: Build Bridges – Not Walls, Not Jails: Taking Action and Mobilizing in Your Communities to Fight to Protect the Rights of Children Seeking Safety

Session: Campaign Plenary – All people deserve safety and freedom: The path forward in the fight for refugee rights

Sara Goldschmidt

Sara Goldschmidt is the Youth & Student Program Manager at Amnesty International USA. She has 10+ years of organizing and movement building experience and works to engage young people in all aspects of AIUSA's work, from activism to leadership to organizational decision-making. Her professional work spans human rights, environmental health, HIV prevention, and youth leadership development. Outside of work, she is usually found exploring California's backcountry.

Session: Youth, Power, Action! Strategy, Tactics and Planning for Amnesty's National Week of Student Action



Shujaa Graham

Shujaa Graham is a Witness to Innocence Peer Organizer, providing guidance and support to other exonerees. Framed for the 1973 murder of a prison guard, he was found innocent in 1981. Now, he travels globally giving impassioned lectures on the death penalty, the criminal justice system, racism, and gang violence.

Session: Killing in our Name in the USA

Simon Billenness

Contact: Twitter: @simonbillenness

Tagged by the New York Times as “a super-specialist” in human rights advocacy, Simon Billenness has for 25 years helped unions, investors, non-profits, universities, and communities use their power to lobby their governments and hold corporations accountable to standards of human rights, environmental responsibility, and social justice.

Session: Dark Side of Global Connection: Confronting U.S. Complicity in Torture and Repression

Steven Feldstein

Contact: Twitter: @stevefeldstein

Steven Feldstein is an associate professor at Boise State University, researching the intersection of technology, global repression and governance. He is a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and previously served as deputy assistant secretary in the bureau of democracy, human rights and labor at the Department of State.

Session: Chinese State Surveillance and “National Security” in Xinjiang

Steven Pieragastini

Steven Pieragastini is a China Country Specialist for Amnesty International USA. He has a Ph.D. in modern Chinese history from Brandeis University and his research focuses on the relationship between the State and religious organizations, especially since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.

Session: Chinese State Surveillance and “National Security” in Xinjiang

Suzanne Wright

Suzanne Wright is an AIUSA country specialist on China and the Chair of the China Coordination Group. She has been an AI member since 1984 and a member of six different local groups. She is also an Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Session: Chinese State Surveillance and “National Security” in Xinjiang

Tarah Demant

Tarah Demant, Director of the Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Program, leads AIUSA’s work on women’s rights, LGBTI rights, Indigenous Peoples’ rights, and sexual and reproductive rights.

Session: End rape and violence against Native women and girls



Vibha Venkatesha

Vibha Venkatesha (she/her) is a Detroit-based activist, an AIUSA Youth Collective member, and represents AIUSA on the Global Youth Collective. Vibha has facilitated workshops on a range of human rights issues, served on the drafting committee for The Hague Youth Declaration of Human Rights, and presented at the UN.

Session: The Climate Crisis and Human Survival: What Can We Do?

Session: Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA

Wamia Siddiqui

Wamia Siddiqui is a long term human rights advocate with Amnesty International and has served on a variety of roles throughout the organization, as well as an ardent supporter of women's rights, especially for marginalized immigrant communities. As an aspiring clinician and Women's Leadership Scholar at Rutgers, she hopes to let human rights inform her current and future work.

Session: Women's Rights are Human Rights

Zeke Johnson

Zeke Johnson is the Senior Director of Programs at AIUSA and leads our team of thematic issue experts working to end human rights violations in the U.S. and globally. He has testified before committees of the UN, IACHR and Congress, and has served as a human rights observer in Standing Rock, Baltimore, Ferguson and Guantanamo.

Session: The Climate Crisis and Human Survival: What Can We Do?

