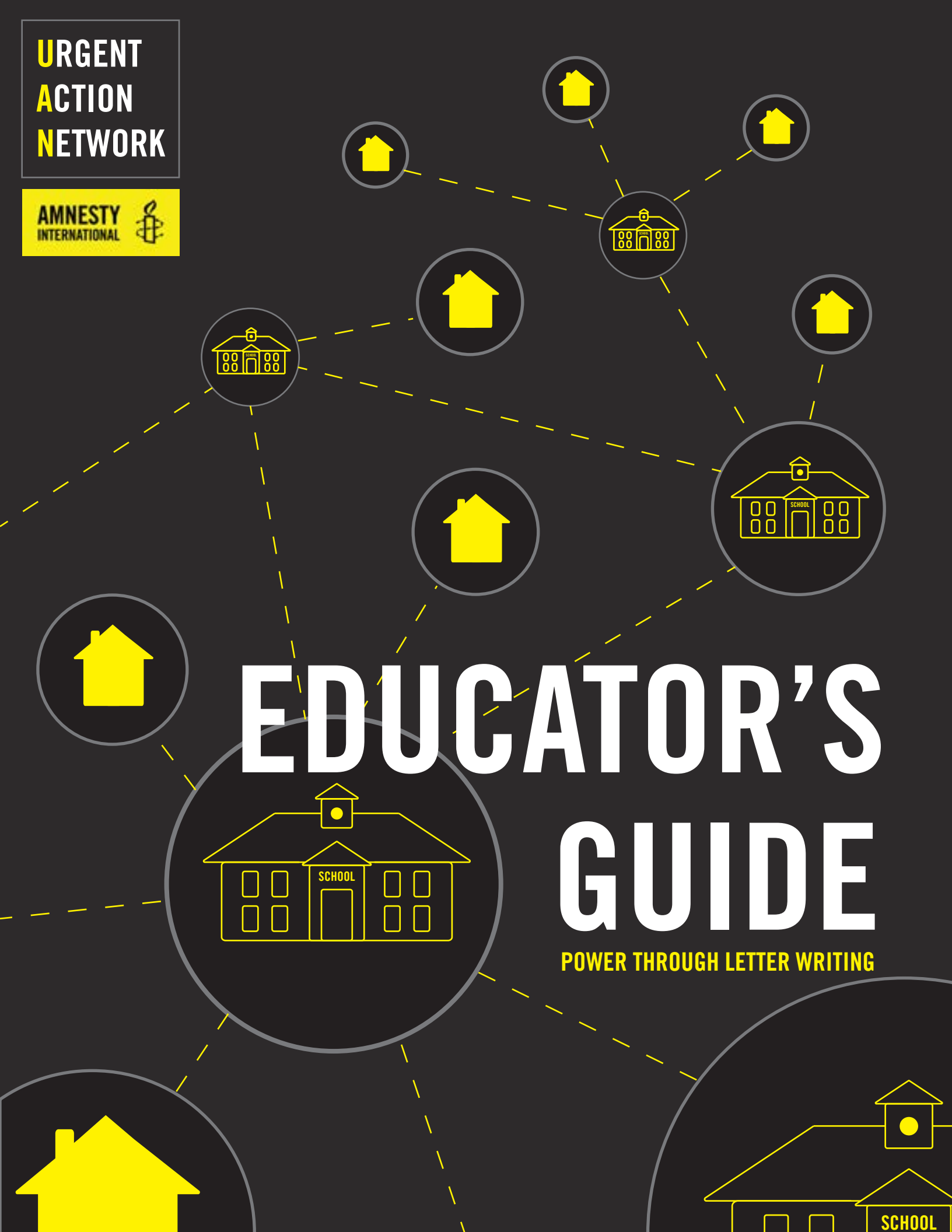


**URGENT
ACTION
NETWORK**

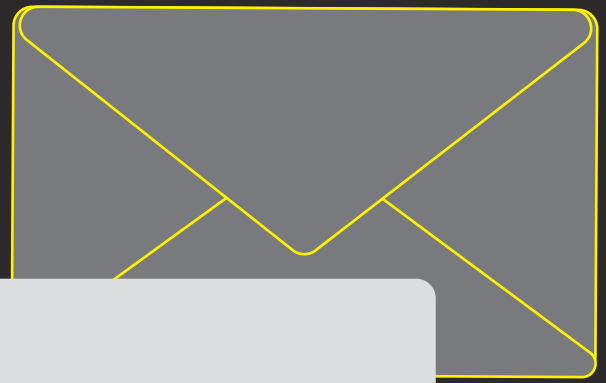
**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL** 



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

POWER THROUGH LETTER WRITING

SCHOOL



WHAT IS THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK?

Hello and thank you for your interest in Amnesty International USA's Urgent Action Network!

This guide was created to help you and your students participate in the Urgent Action Network (UAN), Amnesty's volunteer network of people who take action – such as by writing letters – on emergency cases of human rights abuses around the world. Amnesty International is a grassroots, Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights organization; we are non-partisan and independent of any political party, ideology, or religion.

The Urgent Action Network is a community of people just like you around the world who take action – letters, emails, phone calls, faxes and Tweets – on emergency cases of human rights abuses around the world. Together, we've helped stop torture, halt executions and free prisoners of conscience (people jailed for what they believe in or their identity). Once people like you take action, the relevant authorities quickly realize that the world is watching, and an international audience is deeply concerned about the case. That global pressure often helps achieve a positive outcome.

By joining the UAN, your students will learn about human rights, develop effective writing skills, be inspired by the stories of human rights defenders from different countries and cultures, and experience firsthand how their actions can make a positive difference in people's lives and our world. For example, activists ensured that Abdirahman Ibrahim Adan, a poet from Somaliland, could continue to enjoy his right to freedom of expression.

This guide can be used for students aged 13-22 and may be implemented in a single class session (60 minutes), however you may also choose to expand to an in-depth lesson over several days and involve others in your school or community.

When you sign up for the UAN, you can select how frequently to receive cases (for example, one per month) and you can specify cases highlighting particular human rights issues or particular regions of the world. Each case is a real person or group of people who have requested our help. People like you spring into action, writing a letter or email, Tweeting, or making a phone call to the government official who can resolve the case. The UAN is always free. There is absolutely no cost to participate.

Ready to get started?

- Sign up now at www.amnestyusa.org/uan
- Write your letters
- Mail and report your students' letters by the ask date on the Urgent Action (either to us or the addresses on each UA)
- Read the Instructions page for more info
- Ask questions and get help by contacting me at uan@aiusa.org.

Thank you again for taking part!

Laura Galeano
Programs Associate
Amnesty International USA



INSTRUCTIONS

1. SIGN UP FOR THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK: www.amnestyusa.org/uan

2. WRITE LETTERS WITH YOUR STUDENTS

- Look at page 8 to learn more about how to draft your own compelling letter
- Use Appendices B and C as supplements

3. MAIL AND REPORT YOUR STUDENTS' LETTERS BY THE ACTION REQUEST DATE

You have two options for reporting your letters:

Option 1: Mail the letters to the addresses included on each Urgent Action, and report here: www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/

It is important to report how many letters were written as we share the total number with the people we are trying to help and their families, as well as with the government officials we are trying to persuade.

Option 2: Mail the letters to the addresses included on each Urgent Action and mail the letter reporting form (Page 10) to Amnesty International USA's office:

Amnesty International USA
Attn: Urgent Action Network
5 Penn Plaza, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001

If you need help with postage, let us know and we may be able to reimburse you.

ONLINE RESOURCES

URGENT ACTION SIGN UP:
www.amnestyusa.org/uan

URGENT ACTION REPORTING FORM:
www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/

URGENT ACTION VICTORY PAGE:
www.amnestyusa.org/news/victories/

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LETTER:
www.amnestyusa.org/take-action/urgent-action-network/writing-an-appeal/



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SAMPLE LESSON PLAN



TIME

PROCESS

15 MINUTES

PART I: WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Introduce students to human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Human Rights Defenders

10 MINUTES

PART II: URGENT ACTIONS

Explain the Urgent Action Network, and read through one or more UAs as a class or individually

25 MINUTES

PART III: LETTER WRITING

Read through the annotated letter (Appendix B) and make note of the effective letter writing tips. Provide letter writing scaffold (Appendix C), if desired. Students write their own letters for as many cases as time permits. This guide will include 2 sample cases, but more can be found at www.amnestyusa.org/uan

10 MINUTES

PART IV: GUIDED REFLECTION



NATIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS



The following is an abbreviated list of teaching standards that correspond with the lessons contained in this guide:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

NUMBER 4: Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

NUMBER 11: Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

NUMBER 12: Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

NUMBER 5: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

NUMBER 6: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

NUMBER 9: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

NUMBER 10: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.



PART I: WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

OBJECTIVES:

- Students gain a basic understanding of human rights
- Students are able to apply the concept of human rights to their own lives

PLAN:

Use the following prompts to introduce your students to human rights and their individual relationship to this universal concept



1. Explain to your students that each of them has human rights. Every person in the classroom, city and world was born with the same human rights. Human rights are the rights that all people have simply because they are human. These rights are inalienable: they cannot be denied or taken away under any circumstance.

You may explain that even though no one's human rights can ever be taken away (you can always claim these rights and they should always be respected) a person's rights may sometimes be violated by a government or other actor.

Ask students to take a moment to think about their daily lives. What is an example of a human right that they exercise on a daily basis?

Possible answer: The right to freedom of expression. Tell students that they exercise their right to freedom of expression when they do something as normal as post a thought or opinion online.

3. Human rights protect individuals and create obligations for governments to take specific actions to ensure that everyone's human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled without discrimination. Sometimes governments violate or fail to protect these rights.

That is why it's important for individuals and groups to take peaceful actions to advocate for their rights and the rights of others and to hold governments accountable. You may exercise some of these rights in your life every day without even thinking about it.

Connect back to the freedom of expression example in #1. Around the world, some people are sent to prison for years by their government simply for writing a post on Facebook. Ask students to imagine what it would feel like to be sent to prison for years just for posting a peaceful thought on Facebook.

Emphasize that around the world, and even here at home, people experience violations of their human rights every day.

2. Explain that there are documents that teach us about our human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR was the first international agreement to clearly establish that the same rights belong equally to every single person. This milestone declaration was adopted by the United Nations (UN) in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the devastation of the Second World War. The UDHR was written when the countries of the world came together to work out how to build peace and ensure that such atrocities would never happen again.

After the UDHR, additional treaties were adopted by the UN that specifically identified the civil and political rights (such as the right to freedom of speech or religion) as well as the economic, social and cultural rights (such as the right to education and healthcare) that every person requires to live a life of freedom and dignity.

4. People who take peaceful action to protect their rights or the rights of others are called "human rights defenders". Anyone can be a human rights defender: young or old, teachers, students, journalists, farmers, lawyers and more. You can be considered a human rights defender regardless of whether you've been taking action to protect human rights for years, or just one time. Defending human rights may take many forms, including letter-writing, phone calls, attending protests, educating your community and more.

Sometimes people who take action to defend human rights are threatened, harassed, imprisoned or even killed just for their peaceful efforts to defend human freedoms and dignity.

See Page 17 for additional information about human rights defenders, the right to freedom of expression, freedom from torture and other rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).





PART II: URGENT ACTION CASES



OBJECTIVES:

- Students are introduced to the Urgent Action Network (UAN) and Urgent Actions (UAs)
- Students draw connections between the introduction to human rights and individual cases

PLAN: Use the following prompts to introduce your students to the idea of the Urgent Action Network, the details of example cases, and how students can use the power of their words to positively influence these cases.

1. Tell students that today they will be learning about the Urgent Action Network, which is made up of a community of people around the world who take actions on cases of real people whose human rights are being violated. Explain that people around the world of all ages – including students like themselves in dozens of other countries – are reading about these same cases and writing letters of their own to help bring about justice for these individuals. These letters are important because they will be written to the government officials who have the power to stop the human rights violations in each case.

2. Distribute Urgent Actions (UAs) (2 example cases can be found on page 15).

Introduce as many UAs as desired, paying special attention to the brief description of the case in order to illustrate the human rights violations. Provide the option to read the case sheets individually, or out loud with the entire class.

3. Ask your students what they think is wrong or unfair about how people in these cases have been treated.

4. Ask students to name some of the specific human rights issues implicated in the cases.

Examples could include:

- Right to freedom of expression
- Right to freedom of assembly (including peaceful meetings, demonstrations or rallies)
- Right to freedom of association (including forming or joining a group without interference)
- Right to freedom from torture
- Right to freedom from discrimination
- Right to a fair trial

See Page 17 for additional information about these rights and Page 19 for a glossary of terms.



PART III: LETTER WRITING



OBJECTIVES:

- Students recognize how their letters can have an impact to help end human rights abuses
- Students identify the components of an effective letter
- Students use this knowledge to write letters

PLAN:

Use the Urgent Action case sheet(s) to share information about the particular case(s) you've selected and to empower students to write effective letters. Two Urgent Actions with sample letters can be found on page 15; you can find more at www.amnestyusa.org/uan. And a letter-writing scaffold and annotated letter from an example case are included in this guide.

Now that your students have learned about these real people who are experiencing human rights violations, they are able to use the power of their words to make a difference in the lives of the cases.

"It's tremendous to, in some way, be able to connect with you because all of you across the globe, particularly the members of Amnesty who have played such an important and crucial role in facilitating this, but also in creating the pressure that led to my release." – Shahidul Alam, a photographer and social activist who was imprisoned for exercising his freedom of expression and freed after more than 100 days behind bars.



Visit www.amnestyusa.org/news/victories/ for more success stories!

WHICH CASES WILL YOU WRITE FOR TODAY?

Consider posing this question to the class and calling upon a few students to share what inspires them to write for the cases they selected.

Provide time for students to write the letters for their selected cases. Note that students should refer to the case sheet with the sample letter for their selected cases and that it is important to follow the instructions and information as provided, as it has been carefully researched to be most effective in order to resolve these cases.



If students wish to write more letters or if time is running low, provide the option to finish their letters on another day or write more at home and turn them in during the next class period. If you are using the Urgent Action Network as part of a unit, you may consider offering extra credit for additional letters written.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Explain to students why their words are more powerful than they might think. Tell your students to imagine that they are one of the government officials that have been identified to have the power to end the abuses in one of the cases. Imagine they are sitting at their desks and receive one letter about the case. Then 100 letters...then 1,000 letters...then 100,000 letters, all calling for them to put an end to the human rights violations against this individual.

"Thank you (Amnesty International) for all the help you have given my family, and me, to achieve this. Without you I don't think this would have been possible." – Ariel Ruiz Urquiola, a former prisoner of conscience in Cuba who was released after being included in the UAN.

In addition to opening prison doors, letters to officials can improve the conditions for people who are still in prison. As letters begin to flood in, prison authorities realize that there are people around the world who know that this person is imprisoned there and are concerned for his or her wellbeing.

These letters cannot be ignored. By speaking out, we can make change happen through the power of our numbers and voices.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LETTER?

See the six simple rules below. If desired, distribute the case sheets and sample letters (found below and at www.amnestyusa.org/uan) or the annotated letter (Page 13), which is marked to explain the effective components of a letter.

Provide the option to review the annotated letter together before students write their own letters. Consider distributing the letter writing scaffold for students to help craft their letters.

Follow six simple rules for writing effective appeal letters:

1. Always be polite.
2. Follow the instructions and information provided and avoid any mention of religious holidays or politics.
3. Let them know who you are and mention that you are a student.
4. If you have a personal connection to the country or issue, feel free to include it. This will show officials that your letter is genuine, and that people around the world are watching their country.
5. Emphasize how the person you are writing to has the power to make a difference.
6. Be brief—one page at the most. Sometimes just a few well-crafted lines can be most effective.

“It was very heart-warming to receive support” Vitalina Koval, a women’s rights activist, says. “When you see that so many people support you, it helps you to calm down, gain confidence in oneself and it gives you strength to move on.”

PART IV: GUIDED REFLECTION

OBJECTIVES:

- Students consider their emotional reaction to this exercise
- Students synthesize their understanding of human rights, the individual and their writing activities
- Students apply concepts learned to their own community

Once their letters are complete, allow time for the students to reflect on what they have learned and the letters they have written. Consider asking students the following questions to inspire reflection and sharing among the class:

- How has your understanding of human rights changed?
- How did it feel to advocate for another person’s human rights?
- Which case inspired you, and why?
- What human rights abuses exist in our community? In the United States? Around the world?
- What are some other ways you can think of to take action for someone else’s human rights?

If students are interested in getting involved with Amnesty International’s human rights work, contact uan@aiusa.org for ideas and resources.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON EACH CASE?

Two case sheets with sample letters can be found in this guide, and others can be found at www.amnestyusa.org/uan

HOW CAN I GET MY STUDENTS MORE INVOLVED WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS?

Email youth@aiusa.org!

HOW DO I FIND NEW URGENT ACTIONS (UA), AND WHAT WILL THEY TELL ME?

If you have already signed up to the UAN, you will receive UAs in your email inbox. The email will provide you with a brief description of the case, the contact information of our target officials, and a sample letter. If you want to see a full list of every UA we send out, you can go to our main page:

www.amnestyusa.org/uan. Each UA has its own webpage, as well as additional information which can be downloaded in either Word or PDF format.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO PARTICIPATE?

All that we require from you as an educator are paper, envelopes and postage. We encourage you to send all the letters to the government officials directly, here are postage rates: within the United States, letters (up to 1 oz.) cost 50 cents each. To all other countries, airmail letters and cards (up to 1 oz.) cost \$1.15 each. If cost is a barrier for participation, please contact us and we will try to reimburse you for postage. Please note that you are welcome to fundraise for postage.

SHOULD MY STUDENTS INCLUDE THEIR NAME AND ADDRESS ON THEIR LETTERS?

It is up to you! Students can sign their full name or just their first name, and either leave off their address or include it. Please note that sometimes governments will send an acknowledgement letter on the case. Another option is listing your school's address for each student! Please note that if a student does not include an address, then they will not be able to receive a government response.

WHEN SHOULD WE WRITE?

Anytime between now and the listed action date on the UA.

HOW SHOULD I SHARE HOW MANY LETTERS WE WROTE AND BY WHEN?

You have two options: either send the letters to the targets and mail us the reporting form (Page 10) in this guide or send your letters to the recipients and report the letters written online at www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/. Please complete either before the contact before date on the UA.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I SHARE HOW MANY LETTERS MY STUDENTS WROTE?

Yes! It is essential to let us know how many letters your students wrote, either by filling out the online form or by sending the reporting form (Page 10). We share the total number of letters with the people we are trying to help and their families, as well as with the government officials we are trying to persuade. Reporting also helps us evaluate how we can improve the Urgent Action Network and get more people involved. To report, please use the feedback form on the next page or report online:

www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/.

DO OUR LETTERS REALLY MATTER?

Yes! A letter may seem a little old-fashioned, but that is also a source of its strength. When authorities receive thousands of letters about a particular person, they know that the world is watching them. Individuals who have experienced these human rights abuses tell us that our letters to government officials have a huge impact. Hear from them at www.amnestyusa.org/news/victories/.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? Contact us at uan@aiusa.org.



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LETTER REPORTING FORM

Please let us know the number of letters you and your students wrote. You have two options for reporting:

1. Mail the letters to the addresses included on each case sheet, and let us know how many you sent:
www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/

2. Or: Mail all letters to the addresses included on each case sheet and mail this reporting form to Amnesty International USA's office:

Amnesty International USA
Attn: Urgent Action Network
5 Penn Plaza, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001

If you need help with postage, let us know and we may be able to reimburse you.

By reporting, you can help us track our impact, improve the Urgent Action Network, and use the total number of letters worldwide in our lobbying of government officials. We will also let our cases and their families know how many letters were written for them!

Questions? Contact us at uan@aiusa.org

FIRST NAME _____

LAST NAME _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

OF STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED _____

HOW MANY LETTERS DID YOU (OR YOUR CLASS) WRITE FOR EACH CASE?

COUNTRY & UA NUMBER	# OF APPEAL LETTERS
<i>Example: Indonesia - 199.18</i>	<i>Example: 32</i>

HOW TO CONTINUE WITH THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK



Steps in Continuing with the UAN:

1. Make sure you are signed up to the UAN!

You can sign up at www.amnestyusa.org/uan.

2. Choose how often you will lead your students in writing letters

New UAs are distributed almost every day. This means that you could make this a weekly or bi-weekly school activity, or you could hold events a couple of times a year where students can get together and write letters. It is entirely up to you!

3. Pick your cases

There are a variety of different ways you can pick cases. You can either focus on a particular country, or you can look at our range of thematic issues that you want to expose your students to, such as Human Rights Defenders cases or LGBT issues.

4. Write your letters

You can reuse this guide to help your students in their letter writing process.

5. Report your actions

It is important to report how many letters were written as we share the total number with the people we are trying to help and their families, as well as with the government officials we are trying to persuade. You can send in the letter reporting form (page 10), or report your letters: www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/.

6. Send us your address!

We send certificates to schools that are working hard to support human rights by consistently implementing the Urgent Action Network into their curriculum or extracurricular activities.

Per Calendar Year:

300 Letters = UAN Certificate of Achievement

600 Letters = UAN Certificate of Achievement & UAN goodies for your whole class!

Group With Most Reported Letters = The school that sends the most letters in a year will receive a commemorative plaque

We hope that you will continue your journey with the Urgent Action Network. We are here to support your human rights work.

Please contact us at uan@aiusa.org with any questions or concerns.



APPENDIX A: VICTORIES



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – FAMILY SEEKING ASYLUM FROM DETENTION (USA: UA 53.18)

Asylum seekers 15-year-old Astrid and her father Arturo were released from immigration detention at the Berks County Residential Center on March 23rd after the successful petition by their lawyers to reopen their case and international pressure calling for the family's release pending the result of their asylum claim.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – PRESIDENT PARDONS TWO MEN SENTENCED TO DEATH (SOUTH SUDAN: UA 240.17)

James Gatdet and William Endley received a presidential pardon on October 31, 2018. The president also ordered the immediate deportation of William Endley to his home country, South Africa. They were released on November 2nd.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – INDIGENOUS LEADER ENDS 2 MONTH HUNGER STRIKE (CHILE: UA 75.18)

After nearly two months on a hunger strike, Mapuche Indigenous spiritual leader Machi Celestino Córdova is granted access to his ceremonial altar to carry out a renewal ceremony, essential to guaranteeing the Mapuches' psychic and physical well-being.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – PALESTINIAN PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RELEASED (ISRAEL/OPT: UA 26.18)

On June 6th, Palestinian activist and human rights defender, Munther Amira was released from Hadarim Prison in Israel after serving his prison sentence. He was convicted on charges relating to his peaceful participation in protests.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – SUPREME COURT ORDERS JOURNALIST'S RELEASE (AZERBAIJAN: UA 186.17)

On April 5th, Azerbaijan's Supreme Court ordered the release of Aziz Orujov, an independent journalist and CEO of the internet TV channel Canal 13, on a suspended three-year sentence. The prisoner of conscience had been detained since May 2, 2017 on fabricated charges and in inhumane conditions.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – FORCIBLY RETURNED WOMAN NO LONGER AT RISK (NORTH KOREA: UA 253.17)

Detained since December 3, 2017 in North Korea for leaving the country without legal permits, Koo Jeong-hwa's family reports that she is no longer at risk of being sent to a political prison camp together with her 4-year-old son.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – CARTOONIST RELEASED AFTER CHARGES DROPPED (EQUATORIAL GUINEA: UA 219.17)

Equatorial Guinean cartoonist and activist, Ramón Esono Ebalé was released from Malabo prison of Black Beach on March 7th. Eight days earlier on February 27th, the charge of 'counterfeiting money' against him was dropped after a court hearing in Malabo.



URGENT ACTION VICTORY! – TEXAS GOVERNOR COMMUTES DEATH SENTENCE (USA: UA 37.18)

On February 22nd, the Governor of Texas commuted the death sentence of Thomas Whitaker hours before he was due to be executed. It was the first such act of clemency in Texas since August 2007, a period which has seen nearly 150 execution in the state.

APPENDIX B: ANNOTATED LETTER

Formal title
and address
of recipient

Mr Abdulhamit Gül
Minister of Justice
Kızılay Mahallesi, Milli Müdafa Cd.
06420 Çankaya
Ankara, Turkey
Email: info@adalet.gov.tr
Fax: +90 (0312) 419 33 70

Salutation (greeting
to recipient)

Dear Minister,

Introductory
statement
that outlines
purpose of
the letter

I am writing to express my **grave concern** over the treatment of **Raşit Tükel**, the chair of the Turkish Medical Association (TBB), and **10 doctors**, who are members of its Central Council in Ankara and seven other provinces. On the 24 of January, the TBB called for an end to Turkey's military operation in Afrin, northern Syria. Following this statement, the TTB received many threats by phone, email and on social media. They asked the government for protection, which they have still not been granted, and instead were raided by the police and detained as part of an investigation for 'making propaganda for a terrorist organization' and 'inciting the public to hatred or hostility'.

Statement of the
desired outcome
of the letter

The TTB's statement is protected under the right to freedom of expression and its members must not be prosecuted for having exercised this right, enshrined in international human rights law and in the Turkish Constitution.

Description of the
specific action
required to meet
the desired
outcome

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Raşit Tükel and 10 other members of the Turkish Medical Association as they have been detained solely for the peaceful expression of their views.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters.

Yours sincerely,

Complimentary close

Citizen X

Citizen X

Your signature –
remember, it is
more powerful
than you think

KEY

... = Strong emotive language

Minister = Formal respectful language

APPENDIX C: LETTER WRITING SCAFFOLD

RECIPIENT'S TITLE AND ADDRESS	
THE SALUTATION (GREETING TO THE RECIPIENT)	
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT THAT OUTLINES THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER	
STATEMENT OF THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THE LETTER	
DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION REQUIRED TO MEET THE DESIRED OUTCOME	
COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE (SHORT AND POLITE REMARK TO END THE LETTER)	
YOUR SIGNATURE	



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URGENT ACTION

HARASSMENT OF ACTIVIST AND FAMILY MUST STOP

Azerbaijani human rights activist and former prisoner of conscience Ilkin Rustamzade and his family have been facing threats and harassment since Ilkin Rustamzade launched a petition asking the government to provide social security to persons affected by COVID-19.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 52.20**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

H.E Ilham Aliyev

President of Azerbaijan
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan
Contact form: https://en.president.az/letters/new_form
Facebook: [@PresidentIlhamAliyev](#)
Twitter: [@presidentaz](#)

Ambassador Elin Suleymanov

Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2741 34th Street NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: 202 337 3500 | Fax: 202 337 5911
Email: azerbaijan@azembassy.us
Twitter: [@azembassyus](#)
Facebook: [@azembassy.us](#)
Instagram: [@azembassyus](#)
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Webpage: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-harassment-of-activist-and-family-must-stop-azerbaijan-ua-52-20/>

Dear President,

I am extremely concerned about the latest campaign of harassment against human rights defender and former prisoner of conscience Ilkin Rustamzade and his family.

Ilkin Rustamzade began receiving anonymous threats on 29 March after he launched a petition calling on the government to provide social assistance to persons affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A person with an anonymous account on social media threatened to publish intimate photos of Ilkin Rustamzade's wife unless he took down the petition. After his refusal to do so, on 6 April the intimate photos of his wife, with her name and telephone number, were published online and on an escort website. It appears that a coordinated and funded smear campaign has also been launched against Ilkin Rustamzade on paid Facebook pages and other online sites.

On 8 April the police searched the house of Ilkin Rustamzade's parents and took his father to the local police station in the Khatai district of Baku. His father was released shortly afterwards without any charges.

Ilkin Rustamzade has experienced ongoing harassment from the authorities for his peaceful activism. In 2013 he became a prisoner of conscience when he was arrested on fabricated charges and spent six years in prison.

I urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that all harassment, threats and intimidation against Ilkin Rustamzade and his family stop immediately; and ensure a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the threats, harassment, violations of the right to privacy and the smear campaign against Ilkin Rustamzade and his family and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

Yours sincerely,

URGENT ACTION

PRISONERS ACROSS PAKISTAN AT RISK OF COVID-19

An inmate at Camp Jail, with a prison population of 3,500 people, in the provincial capital Lahore tested positive for coronavirus before being transferred to a medical facility. However, even as provincial high courts issued directives to release vulnerable, under-trial and elderly prisoners, the Supreme Court of Pakistan suspended all bail orders. Prisons in Pakistan face massive overcrowding (jails in Pakistan have a capacity of 57,742 but currently house 77,275 inmates), with limited hygiene supplies and insufficient access to healthcare. Forcing inmates to practice social distancing would be impossible, given the overcrowding, drastically increasing the potential for the virus to spread. Pakistani authorities must protect the health of all prisoners and should urgently consider measures to reduce the prison population.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 39.20**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Honorable Mr Arif Alvi

President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
President's Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Email: drarifalvi@gmail.com

Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan

Embassy of The Islamic Republic of Pakistan
3517 International Ct NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: 202 243 6500 | Fax: 202 686 1534
Email: consularsection@embassyofpakistanusa.org
Twitter: [@PakEmbassyDC](https://twitter.com/PakEmbassyDC)
Facebook: [@PakistanEmbassyDC](https://www.facebook.com/PakistanEmbassyDC)
Contact Form: <https://bit.ly/2QiCMnI>
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Webpage: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-update-prisoners-across-pakistan-at-risk-of-covid-19-pakistan-ua-39-20/>

Dear President Arif Alvi,

I am writing out of concern for prisoners in Pakistan who must be protected from the COVID-19 outbreak. I am alarmed that a prisoner at the Lahore Camp Jail, with a prison population of 3,500 people, tested positive for the virus on 24 March and all bail orders now stand suspended. Jails in Punjab are worryingly overcrowded, meaning social distancing is not an option for prisoners. Unsanitary conditions mean that preventative steps such as washing hands are harder to follow. The right to health is guaranteed under several human rights treaties. Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) includes the "prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases" as a part of the right to health. In the context of a spreading epidemic, this includes the obligation on states to ensure that preventive care, goods, services and information are available and accessible to all persons.

Should the government fail to act now, Pakistani prisons and detention centers could quickly become hotspots for the transmission of coronavirus. I urge you to release immediately and unconditionally all those detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights; consider if the outbreak qualifies certain prisoners for parole or early release, especially older detainees who no longer pose a threat to the public; and ensure that all prisoners enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, including when it comes to testing and treatment of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



1. Distribute copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Provide time for students to review the document, and then pose the following questions:

- Are there any rights in the UDHR that surprise you?
- Which rights do you think are particularly important in your life, and why?
- What rights do you see protected or violated in your community?

2. Organize a school-wide or community letter-writing event on Human Rights Day, December 10th. Publicize within the school and invite other classes to participate.

3. Organize a competition among classes to see who can write the most letters.

4. Invite students to select one case for which they will do further research at home, learning more about the specific human rights issues and additional background information about the country.



APPENDIX F: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was drawn up by the newly formed United Nations in the years immediately following the Second World War. Since 1948, it has formed the backbone of the international human rights system. The UDHR itself is, as its name states, a declaration. It is a declaration of intent by every government around the world that they will abide by certain basic standards in the treatment of individual human beings. Since its adoption, numerous other binding laws and agreements have been drawn up on the basis of its principles. It is these laws and agreements which allow organizations like Amnesty International to call on governments not to engage in the types of behavior or treatment that the people mentioned in these cases have experienced. Human rights protect individuals, and they create obligations for governments or state officials. They are designed to ensure that every human being, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity, nationality, ethnic identity or religious beliefs, age, socioeconomic class, whatever their beliefs – that all human beings should be treated with respect for their humanity and dignity.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

A Human Rights Defender (HRD) is someone who, individually or in association with others, acts to defend or promote human rights at the local, national, regional or international levels, without resorting to or advocating hatred, discrimination or violence. HRDs come from every walk of life; they may be journalists, lawyers, health professionals, teachers, whistle-blowers, farmers, or relatives of victims of human rights violations. They might defend human rights as part of their professional role, as part of a volunteer group, or one-time basis.

Why are HRDs important?

In 1998, 50 years after the adoption of the UDHR, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the principles of freedom and justice by adopting the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

It recognizes the importance that individuals and groups play in defending human rights. Crucially, it places the responsibility on governments to implement its provisions, particularly the duty to protect defenders from harm as a consequence of their work. Today, however, HRDs and the civic space in which they work is being targeted and attacked instead of supported and protected. Governments, armed groups, companies and other powerful entities and communities who believe their interests are threatened by human rights are using a range of tactics and tools to silence and repress HRDs.





What threats do HRDs face?

HRDs face threats that range from personal attacks like beatings and killings, to the use of legislation to criminalize activities that one might engage in while defending human rights. HRDs are often subjected to methods of surveillance, either digital or physical, and sometimes endure attacks on their ability to communicate freely. HRDs also may experience violations of their rights to peaceful assembly and association, as well as restrictions on their freedom of movement. Central to these methods is the use of “smear campaigns” and stigmatization to delegitimize HRDs and their work. HRDs may face additional threats as a result of intersecting identities. For example, HRDs who are women may be at greater risk of sexual violence.

What about HRDs who are young people?

Young HRDs face specific risks. They tend to be at the bottom of many hierarchies and face age-based discrimination intersecting with other forms of oppression. As a result, and a general stereotype that young people are troublemakers, idealistic and/or immature, many young HRDs are discredited and silenced. But youth-led civil society groups and young people are often key agents of change and make significant contributions to human rights around the world.

What rights do HRDs have?

The Declaration is an international instrument for the protection of the right to defend human rights. It does not create new rights, but reaffirms existing rights that are instrumental to the defense of human rights. These include the rights to freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to access information relating to human rights, as well as the right to provide legal assistance and the freedom to develop and discuss new ideas in the area of human rights. The HRDs Declaration also establishes that governments are ultimately the ones responsible for:

- Protecting HRDs
- Preventing and effectively addressing allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed against them, related to their human rights work
- Ensuring that HRDs can carry out their work in a safe and enabling environment

Check out the following resources for more information about HRDs:

- Human Rights Defenders Under Threat” (2017 Report)
- “Deadly but Preventable Attacks: Killings and Enforced Disappearances of Those Who Defend Human Rights” (2017 Report)
- Human Rights Defenders (2018 edX course)

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) addresses freedom of expression. Everyone has the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas without fear or interference. Yet throughout the world, journalists, bloggers and others face harassment and imprisonment for exercising their right to free speech. While governments generally have not welcomed the prying eye and the biting pen of the investigative reporter, journalists have been increasingly targeted in many countries on account of their professional activities. And yet, freedom of expression is essential to the attainment of all other rights because it provides the space in which to share information about rights, make the public aware of government abuses, and to campaign for those rights. By cracking down on journalists and public discourse, governments seek to restrict the flow of information and diminish the power of the people to act upon the truth. This right is important for the personal development and dignity of every individual and is vital for the fulfillment of other human rights.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Article 5 of the UDHR protects our right to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The UN Convention Against Torture defines torture as “...the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental pain or suffering for purposes such as obtaining information or a confession, or punishing, intimidating or coercing someone.”

NEED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES? Contact us if you need additional information on human rights documents or issues, such as prisoners, business practice and human rights, children’s rights, or economic, social and cultural rights: uan@aiusa.org



APPENDIX G: HUMAN RIGHTS GLOSSARY

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FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The right to seek, receive and share information and ideas, without fear or interference. It is closely linked with freedom of association (the right to meet with anyone you choose, for example, to form and join clubs, societies or trade unions) and the right to take part in a peaceful assembly, such as a demonstration or public meeting.

IMPUNITY

Impunity is when people who have committed crimes avoid punishment. Amnesty calls for these people to be investigated, tried and sentenced fairly, according to the law.

INALIENABLE

Refers to rights that belong to every person and cannot be taken from a person under any circumstances.

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Like everyone, Indigenous people have all of the rights set out in the UDHR. However Indigenous people also have specific rights because of their unique position as first peoples of their nations. Indigenous people's unique rights help ensure that their culture continues to exist into the future. This includes their rights to speak and teach their native language and customs, to live on the land of their ancestors, and to look after sacred sites.

LGBTI

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. Discrimination based on real or perceived LGBTI status could be based on sexual orientation (who you're attracted to); gender identity (how you define yourself, irrespective of your biological sex), gender expression (how you express your gender through your clothing, hair or make-up), or sex characteristics (for example, your reproductive organs).

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

A prisoner of conscience is someone who is imprisoned solely because of who they are (sexual orientation, ethnic, national or social origin, language, birth, color, gender, or economic status) or their religious, political or other beliefs, and who has not used or advocated violence.

TORTURE

Torture occurs when a person intentionally inflicts severe pain or suffering on another for purposes such as obtaining information or a confession, or punishing, intimidating or coercing someone. The perpetrator has to be an official, or there should be some degree of official approval of the act.

UNCONDITIONAL

Unconditional in the context of the release of prisoners of conscience means that no precondition or restrictions have been established prior to their release. "Conditional" releases may include reporting requirements, travel restrictions, or bans from online platforms or political participation.

Questions? Email us at uan@aiusa.org