



# Amnesty International USA's Virtual Annual General Meeting



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## Virtual Sessions Series I: April 19 – May 2

### Week 1

**Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

End Rape and Violence Against Native Women and Girls  
*Speakers: Keely Linton, Pam Kingfisher & Tarah Demant*

**Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> | 8:00PM EST**

Chinese State Surveillance and “National Security” in Xinjiang  
*Speakers: Jewher Ilham & Steven Pieragastini*

**Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

New Tech & the Forever War: The Threat to Human Rights  
*Speakers: Daphne Eviatar*

### Week 2

**Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

Social Media and Activism  
*Speaker: Alison McQuade*

**Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

Separation, Detention, and Deportation: How U.S. Immigration Policies Threaten Access to Healthcare  
*Speakers: Denise Bell, Danisha Jenkins, Kate Clark & Penelope Halkiadakis*  
*Moderator: Lora Randa*

**Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup> | 8:00PM EST**

Under Siege: The Persecution of Human Rights Defenders Around the World and What You Can Do to Support Them!  
*Speakers: Gavrilah Wells, Katilyn O’Shaughnessy & Laura Galeano*  
*Moderator: Andrew Fandino*

## Virtual Sessions Series II: May 3 – May 17

### Week 1

**Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> | 7:30PM EST**

Killing in Our Name in the USA  
*Speaker: Kristina Roth*

**Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> | 8PM EST**

Dark Side of Global Connection: Confronting Corporate Complicity in Human Rights Abuses  
*Speakers: Aydin Anwar, Michael Kleinman & Simon Billenness*  
*Moderator: Hena Zuberi*

**Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> | 7PM EST**

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Detention and Trauma of Children  
*Speakers: Alicia Koutsoulieris & Brad Parker*  
*Moderator: Edie Garwood*

### Week 2

**Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> | 8:00PM EST**

The Climate Crisis and Human Survival: What Can We Do?  
*Speakers: Alejandro Del Pino & Vibha Venkatesha*

**Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> | 8:00PM EST**

All People Deserve Safety and Freedom: The Path Forward in the Fight for Refugee Rights  
*Speakers: Basel Moussily, Charles Forchenmbin, Isabel Kayembe & Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos*  
*Moderator: Denise Bell*

**Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> | 8:00PM EST**

COVID-19  
*Speaker: Janet Lord, Abdullah Chahin & Denise Bell*



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**Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**  
Ending Gun Violence  
*Speaker: Ernest Coverson*

## Virtual Sessions Series III: May 18 – May 30

### Week 1

**Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> | 8:00PM EST**

Standing with Human Rights Defenders in Sri Lanka

*Speakers: Akriti Panthi, Jim McDonald & Thyagi Ruwanpathirana*

**Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> | 7:30PM EST**

Not Someone Else's Problem: Lobbying for Women's Rights in Afghanistan

*Speakers: Alice Dahle, Daniel Balson & Dr. Huma Ahmed-Ghosh*

**Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

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

*Speakers: Jonathan Fantini-Porter, Mary-Evelyn (Mev) Porter & Nestor Fantini*

### Week 2

**Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

Building Bridges. Not Walls, Not Jails: How U.S. Immigration Policies Harm Children and Families Seeking Safety & How We Can Take Action to Fight Back

*Speakers: Antonio Martinez, Ph.D., Charlene D'Cruz & Denise Bell*  
*Moderator: Charanya Krishnaswami*

**Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> | 7:00PM EST**

Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA

*Speakers: Baaqeyah Muhammad El, Benya Kraus, Penelope Halkiadakis & Vibha Venkatesha*  
*Moderator: Lora Randa*



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**Descriptions of each session, along with related speaker info, can be found accordingly in alphabetical order. Please note that contact information has been listed only for speakers who have indicated that this could be shared publicly.**

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## All People Deserve Safety and Freedom: The Path Forward in the Fight for Refugee Rights

Under the Trump administration, we've witnessed attack after attack on long-standing protection systems for people seeking safety in the U.S. This election year will be a defining moment for our country's humanity. Hear about organizing and activism from families and individuals affected by Trump's attacks on refugee protections, and the advocates fighting along their side. We will discuss how to move beyond constantly being on the defense when refugee rights are under attack to organizing and advocating for solutions that safeguard our protection systems for people seeking safety.

### Basel Moussly

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.

### Charles Forchenmbin

Charles Forchenmbin was a traditional tribal chief from the English-speaking region of Cameroon. He was tortured by the dictatorial regime of Paul Biya for exposing election fraud, denouncing government corruption, and speaking out against the persecution of Cameroon's Anglophone minority. He arrived in the US at the southern border seeking safety and was held in immigration detention in Eloy, Arizona for seven months before he was released and granted asylum. A human rights defender, Charles speaks out against torture and human rights abuses in Cameroon and how detention can retraumatize torture survivors. He has testified before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

### Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos

Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos is the New Mexico Program Director at The TransLatin@ Coalition and counsels trans detainees in immigration detention. In this capacity, Alma Rosa worked closely with Amnesty International USA and the National Immigrant Justice Center on the campaign to free Alejandra from the Cibola detention facility. Alma Rosa is also the Santa Fe Dreamers Project Advocacy Director.

### Isabel Kayembe

Isabel Kayembe escaped civil war in Angola and spent 17 years in a refugee camp in Namibia. There, she emerged as a leader helping fellow refugees and working for a UNHCR-funded project inside the camp. Isabel was resettled to Rhode Island in 2015 and is currently a case manager with Refugee Dream Center, where she helps refugees in areas such as housing, job placement, interpreting, and health cultural orientation. She is also pursuing a degree at the Community College of Rhode Island.

### 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



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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.

## Building Bridges. Not Walls, Not Jails: How U.S. Immigration Policies Harm Children and Families Seeking Safety & How We Can Take Action to Fight Back

U.S. policies turning back and detaining asylum-seekers and stripping the right to seek asylum itself have acutely impacted and endangered the safety, health, and human rights of children and families who are simply seeking safety. Join us in an exploration of how we can mobilize in our communities to take action so that children in particular and their families are treated with dignity, respect, and with the care they deserve.

### **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.

### **Charlene D’Cruz**

Contact: [charlene@l4gg.org](mailto:charlene@l4gg.org)

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.

### **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.

### **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.



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## Chinese State Surveillance and "National Security" in Xinjiang

Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are being harassed, detained and arrested in huge numbers. Speakers will address how and why these groups are being targeted; how China's use of facial recognition and other intrusive methods of monitoring, in the name of "national security," facilitate human rights abuses; and what Amnesty International, and AIUSA in particular, are doing to fight back in terms of actions and support for U.S. legislation.

### 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.

### 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.



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## COVID-19

This session will explore the human rights implication of the COVID-19 pandemic and how AIUSA is responding to meet the challenges. COVID-19 is a human rights crisis on an unprecedented scale. It's affecting everyone, but some are hit much harder than others. Amnesty's new RightsNow! Campaign is not just about surviving this pandemic. We must create a new future where all of us can live in dignity and thrive. Join us in the campaign -- together, we will put human rights at the center of the COVID-19 response and recovery.

### 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.

### Abdullah Chahin

Abdullah became a founding member of several grassroots civil society organizations that blossomed in Syria during the popular uprising of 2011. He received the Homo Homini award for human rights activism on behalf of Doctors Coordinates of Damascus, which pioneered organized medical relief inside the conflict areas in Syria. He acted as a former treasurer and board member of the Syrian Nonviolence Movement (SNVM), a French NGO that works on promoting social and political change in Syria through peaceful means. He is also a former chairman and board member of the Syrian Expatriates Organization (SEO), a US based NGO that works on promoting democratic change in Syria through capacity building of local governance bodies.

### 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.



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## Dark Side of Global Connection: Confronting Corporate Complicity in Human Rights Abuses

Examining US complicity with repressive systems, this panel explores how activists promote transparency and accountability along with corporate social responsibility. Experts will examine technology firms' relationships to authoritarian governments, the overall impact of Facebook on human rights abuses, problematic supply chains in Southeast Asia and Africa, while shedding light on the global arms trade impacting civilians from Yemen to Libya. How does shareholder activism intersect with Amnesty's work? How can we as consumers be more conscious global citizens and at least do less harm?

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### Hena Zuberi

Hena Zuberi is a human rights advocate and a Director for Justice for All, a journalist with years of experience both in print and television, she has for many years served as the Editor in Chief of Muslimmatters.org, the most widely read publication in the Islamic digital economy, where she writes commentary on issues related to Muslims living in the West. . She is the cofounder of RashidunDC, an organization that serves the most underserved in the nation's capital.





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## End Rape and Violence Against Native Women and Girls

Rape and violence against Native women and girls is a national epidemic. In this session, participants will hear from Native women and activists, who will share their experiences and discuss victories, challenges, and the path ahead. Participants will learn how they can work at the state/federal level to help end the violence.

### Keely Linton

Keely Linton is an Íipay & 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.

### Pam Kingfisher

Contact: [Kingfisherpj@gmail.com](mailto: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.

### 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.



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## Ending Gun Violence

Nearly 100 people die every day due to gun violence. Government inaction means that despite making the headlines, gun violence remains an everyday reality – especially for many communities of color. The government must protect our right to life and help end gun violence. Join us for a powerful discussion among advocates and community leaders and learn how we can build a human rights movement to end gun violence.

### Ernest Coverson

Ernest Coverson currently serves as the Campaign Manager for EGV Campaign for AIUSA. Ernest began his career in human rights as a student activist and worked his way up to Regional Director with NAACP. Since Ernest became the manager his passion has led AIUSA to be a respected partner in the Gun Violence Prevention community.



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

This session examines how Israel routinely detains Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank as young as five years of age and systematically processes those 12 and above in military courts, instead of civilian court. 75% of kids report ill-treatment during arrest and/or interrogation. Many are imprisoned in Israel, which contravenes international law and where they are rarely able to see their parents. Increasing numbers are held in solitary confinement. Learn how you can stop your tax dollars from supporting this policy.

### Alicia Koutsouleris

Contact: [Alicia@AmnestyOrlando.org](mailto:Alicia@AmnestyOrlando.org),  
Twitter: @IOTPA, Instagram:  
Amnesty\_Israel\_Palestine, YouTube:  
Amnesty International USA  
Israel/OPT/Palestine

Alicia Koutsouleris (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.

### 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."

### 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.

### 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.



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## Killing in Our Name in the USA

Attendees will hear about status of the death penalty and killings by police and the role that race plays in both, learn why the system is broken, what reforms have succeeded and what you can do to get your state's criminal justice system to better respect human rights.

### Kristina 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.



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## New Tech & the Forever War: The Threat to Human Rights

The United States went to war in Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, DC. Since then, it's expanded that war to at least eight different countries, and increasingly sophisticated technology, including unmanned aerial vehicles – “drones” – is making it easier, both practically and politically, for the U.S. to remain at war indefinitely. While the U.S. already employs fighter jets and drones, it is also supporting development of lethal autonomous weapons – also known as “killer robots” – which could decide for themselves who to kill, how and where. This workshop will explore how the U.S. reliance on rapidly-developing technology encourages endless war that threatens the human rights of us all. And it will explain how activists can urge U.S. lawmakers both to rein in use of the current weapons systems, and to prevent autonomous weapons from making wars even more deadly, endless and out-of-control than they already seem to be.

### Daphne Eviatar

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



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## Not Someone Else's Problem: Lobbying for Women's Rights in Afghanistan

President Trump and Democratic presidential candidates have committed to ending U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. As the Taliban and Afghan war lords vie to fill the power vacuum, Afghan women, refugees, and human rights defenders stand the most to lose. By supporting targeted development and diplomacy efforts, the U.S. government can defend human rights in Afghanistan. This will not happen, however, without sustained pressure from constituents. The event will discuss this dynamic and offer lobbying strategies for Amnesty members to push for change.

### Dr. Huma Ahmed-Ghosh

Dr. Huma Ahmed-Ghosh is Professor in the Department of Women's Studies at San Diego State University. She is also on the Advisory Board of the Center for Islamic and Arabic Studies and the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies. Her research focuses on women in Afghanistan, Muslim immigrant women to the USA, and Islam and feminism. Ahmed-Ghosh has published extensively on her research on Muslim women's issues in India, the USA and on women in Afghanistan.

Ahmed-Ghosh has also published articles on gendered ageing in India, widowhood and domestic violence in India.

Ahmed-Ghosh recently published two edited books titled, *Contesting Feminisms: Gender and Islam in Asia*, and *Asian Muslim Women: Globalization and Local Realities* published by SUNY Press, New York (2015). She is currently working on a book titled, *Women Transforming Communities: Confronting Conflict and Building Peace about gendered violence and conflict*.

### Alice Dahle

Contact: [adahle48@gmail.com](mailto: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.

### 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.



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

As the U.S. administration implements discriminatory policies against people seeking safety in the U.S., we must consider their impact on the health of targeted communities. Experts have highlighted the profound harm caused by family separation and the detention of asylum-seekers. In collaboration with Physicians for Human Rights and local immigrant rights groups, join us in exploring the health impacts of these policies on the lives of immigrants and asylum-seekers, and the advocacy and community response to them.

### Danisha Jenkins

Contact: [danishj@uci.edu](mailto:danishj@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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.



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## Social Media and Activism

Are you using social media to boost your activism? Are you giving your audience the best content? Find out at the Social Media and Activism session.

### 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.





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## Standing with Human Rights Defenders in Sri Lanka

Human rights defenders in Sri Lanka are increasingly under attack. They include Fr. Elil Rajendran (harassed for organizing a commemoration of Tamil war dead), Sandya Eknaligoda (threatened for demanding justice for her disappeared husband, Prageeth Eknaligoda, and for the thousands of other disappearances), and Ruki Fernando (an internationally respected activist detained for his human rights work). Workshop participants will learn the current challenges they face and will brainstorm strategies to provide international support and solidarity.

### 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.

### Jim McDonald

Contact: [jmcdonald@aiusacs.org](mailto:jmcdonald@aiusacs.org);  
Twitter: @jmccdon; Instagram:  
[jim.mcdonald549](https://www.instagram.com/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.

### Thyagi Ruwanpathirana

Thyagi Ruwanpathirana, a South Asia and Sri Lanka Researcher at Amnesty International, holds an LLB from the University of Warwick and an LLM in Human Rights from Birkbeck College, University of London. Prior to joining Amnesty International, Thyagi was the National Legal Advisor for the International Commission of Jurists. She was also a National Research Consultant with the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms, and a Researcher with the Legal and Constitutional unit with the Centre for Policy Alternatives. Thyagi has also worked on transitional justice, enforced disappearances, reparations for conflict related sexual violence, counter-terror laws, anti-Muslim violence in Sri Lanka and memorialization.



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

The climate crisis is real, urgent and already destroying lives. Without immediate action, it will get much worse. In this participatory session, we'll discuss the science behind the climate crisis, who is responsible, the disproportionate impact on people already facing discrimination and marginalization, and what we can do to stop it. We'll focus on solutions, including the concept of Climate Justice, and celebrate the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, youth and front-line communities.

### 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.

### 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.



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

Amnesty International volunteer Mary-Evelyn Porter, Professor Nestor Fantini (former POC), and Jonathan Fantini Porter, a former U.S. Congress and White House staffer, portrayed in the 2019 Amnesty International-produced documentary “Life, Love, & Liberty,” discussing the successful work of an AIUSA Amnesty volunteer that led to Nestor’s release and a son who many nicknamed the “Amnesty Kid.”

### Jonathan Fantini-Porter

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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).

### 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

### Nestor Fantini

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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.



# Amnesty International USA's Virtual Annual General Meeting



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## Under Siege: The Persecution of Human Rights Defenders Around the World and What You Can Do to Support Them!

Human rights defenders (HRD) around the world are routinely the target of death threats, smear campaigns, imprisonment, sexual violence, torture, and even assassination. Since 1998, over 3,500 human rights defenders have been killed worldwide. In 2018 alone, 321 human rights defenders were killed. Come and learn about very concrete ways that you can help protect Brave human rights defenders in such countries as Colombia, Saudi Arabia, & the Philippines.

### 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.

### Gavrilah Wells

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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.

### 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.

### 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.



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## Young and Rising: Building Leadership at AIUSA

In 1961, Peter Benenson spoke out for the rights of two Portuguese students. Shortly afterwards, a group of young people established AIUSA. Young people have been at the forefront of Amnesty's work from the beginning, making up a majority of AIUSA's activist base. Join youth members from Amnesty's Board of Directors, Nominations Committee, and the Global and National Youth Collectives as we explore how young people are leading AIUSA's bigger, bolder and more inclusive movement.

### Baaqeyah Muhammad El

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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

### 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.

### Penelope Haliadakis

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.

### 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.

### 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.