

Dear Activists,

On Saturday night of this year's AIUSA Annual General Meeting, I joined members and staff for the activist awards ceremony. It was good to see so many smiling faces fill the screen.

During the ceremony, we celebrated the remarkable work individuals and groups of volunteers are doing to advance Amnesty's mission and priorities. One highlight for me was our Leading Change Student Group award given to Milton High School of Milton, Georgia. Milton Amnesty persevered in the face of pushback from the school administration and community to achieve great successes on domestic and international priorities. For AIUSA's End Gun Violence campaign, they organized a banner drop and virtual lobby day in support of the Break the Cycle of Violence Act. They met with their Georgia Senators to advocate for the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act and worked on a COVID-19 docuseries to highlight human rights issues exacerbated by the pandemic. Milton Amnesty's creative and engaging activism is commendable and inspires hope.

I'm also proud that this year already, we've seen the two largest member calls in our recent history, on the apartheid report in February and then on Ukraine in March. We saw about 2000 member registrations across those two calls, showing the interest and commitment of our membership to engage on human rights crises.

These examples represent why I have followed and supported Amnesty over the years. Amnesty's activists constantly show up and challenge those who abuse power with impunity, and Amnesty's member leaders ensure our research and our voices are feared by these abusers.

Amnesty was started as a unique experiment more than sixty years ago to promote and protect human rights and empower people to be a force for human rights, transparency, and accountability. AIUSA's activists and member leaders prove that experiment worked!

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, a time when we pause to reflect on your hard work and express gratitude for our partnership. Please know that I, our staff, and the AIUSA Board of Directors hold you in deep respect and appreciation *throughout the year*. Thank you for keeping Amnesty's candle burning bright and doing all you can to advance human rights for our world.

Paul O'Brien
Executive Director
Amnesty International USA