

Amnesty International USA
Interim Updated Code of Conduct
Adopted 10/22/2020
with proposed revisions adopted 6/26/22

Introduction

Amnesty International USA (“AIUSA”) is the United States section of the Amnesty International movement, the largest human rights organization in the world. AIUSA has adopted this Code of Conduct (the “Code”) to protect the safety, integrity and reputation of AIUSA and its officers, directors, employees, interns, volunteers and volunteer leaders, members and all other participants in the human rights efforts undertaken by or in the name of AIUSA.

The Code applies to (a) all persons, including AIUSA’s officers, directors, employees, interns, volunteer leaders and other members, who undertake and participate **whether in person or via email, social media or other virtual space** in any human rights activities in the name of AIUSA and (b) any attendees of any national, regional or other in-person or virtual meeting involving AIUSA activities or any related social gathering outside any such meeting **which occurs at any point or in any context from the start of the meeting until such time as the meeting is in its entirety adjourned or concluded** (all such individuals are hereinafter referred to as a “Party” or “Parties”). Any person who meets the definition of a Party as defined in this Code will be deemed to have agreed to abide by this Code by assuming any of the roles outlined in subparagraph (a) or by registering and/or participating in any meeting outlined in subparagraph (b).

Statement of Values

All Parties are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that embodies integrity and respect at all times **while acting in any way in the name of AIUSA or attending any AIUSA meetings, events or activities**. The personal conduct of all Parties shall be above reproach in regard to any activity that may reflect upon AIUSA. All Parties are, in particular, required at all **such** times to conduct themselves consistent with core human rights principles including non-discrimination, accessibility, participation and inclusion, respect for diversity and equity between and among all individuals. Parties should **[DELETE: strive to]** demonstrate the highest standard of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, collaboration, inclusion and fortitude in all activities and efforts related to the mission of AIUSA in order to inspire confidence and trust in such activities and efforts.

Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

1. General Overview

The following list sets out expected standards of conduct for all Parties. All Parties shall:

- a. Hold paramount and protect as they are reasonably able the safety, health, integrity and welfare of all persons involved in AIUSA activities.
- b. Act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance personal and professional respect, integrity and the dignity of AIUSA consistent with its mission in advancing and protecting all human rights.
- c. Consistent with the AIUSA values of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (“IDEA”), treat with respect, fairness and impartiality all persons, without regard to or discrimination on the basis of any aspect of their being including but not limited to any legally protected characteristics (examples of which are outlined below).
- d. Respect and protect privileged and/or confidential information to which they have access in the course of their duties **or activities**.

2. Discrimination and Harassment

AIUSA will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any nature against any person for any reason including but not limited to any discrimination or harassment on the basis of legally protected characteristics, such as race (including traits associated with race, such as protective hairstyle), ethnicity, color, national origin, alienage, ancestry, religion, creed, sex/gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition), age, marital status or partnership status, familial or caregiver status, disability, veteran status, current or former membership in the U.S. Armed Forces or a state military unit, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual offense or stalking, citizenship status, political activities or affiliation, genetic information, sexual orientation, physical appearance or affect, gender identity or expression, or sexual or reproductive health decisions. Harassment or discrimination based on wealth, income, class, or education is also prohibited.

Harassment and other forms of discrimination will not be tolerated at any AIUSA-related events **or in the context of any other AIUSA activity**, regardless of whether such conduct

is illegal under local law in the jurisdiction in which the conduct occurs. Any person who is subject to discrimination or harassment, or witnesses such behavior, should report it promptly to a supervisor, representative of Human Resources and/or complete the AIUSA Ethics Complaint Form [\[link to form\]](#) **[DELETE: which is part of this Code]**.

“Discrimination” for purposes of this Code includes any disparate treatment of a person because of or based on any of the legally protected or other characteristics outlined above or participation in a legally protected activity outlined below that is not clearly justified by any necessity related to the mission or operations of AIUSA.

“Harassment” for purposes of this Code includes any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct toward another person that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual for any reason, including but not limited to any characteristic protected by law, activity protected by law, or by AIUSA policy (e.g., race, color, religion/creed, etc.), or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance within AIUSA, and/or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual’s employment or volunteer opportunities.

Both sexual and other discriminatory harassment can include harassment which subjects a person to inferior terms, conditions or privileges of employment or volunteer role, whether because of a person’s membership in a protected group or otherwise, as viewed from the perspective of a reasonable person in like circumstances. An aggregation of less serious incidents can constitute harassment, even if one of the incidents considered on its own might not be harassment. Harassment can be physical, spoken or written, and in-person or through other means, such as email or social media. Harassment could be: verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements, slurs, derogatory comments, or jokes); physical (for example, assault or inappropriate or non-consensual physical contact); visual (for example, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings, or making derogatory gestures); or online or by email (for example, derogatory statements or sexually suggestive social media postings).

In particular, all Parties are prohibited from engaging in sexual harassment **in any context related to AIUSA**. Sexual harassment for purposes of this Code means any harassment based on a person’s sex, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity or expression. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and/or other unwelcome conduct that is of a sexual nature or is directed at a person because of that person’s sex where

submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or volunteer status; submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting the employment or volunteer status of an individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance within AIUSA or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or volunteer environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle or not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender, gender identity or orientation. Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature and also includes harassment that is not sexual in nature (for example, offensive remarks about an individual's sex, sexual orientation, physical appearance or affect, gender or gender identity) as well as sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature as viewed from the perspective of a reasonable person in like circumstances.

AIUSA specifically will not tolerate any Parties engaging in any of the following in connection with AIUSA-related employment, volunteering or events, including without limitation:

- a) Threatening or taking adverse actions if sexual favors are not granted;
- b) Demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable or preferential treatment;
- c) Unwelcome flirtations, propositions or advances of an implicit or explicit sexual nature;
- d) Intimidation including but not limited to bullying in an apparent effort to obtain sexual favors;
- e) Unwelcome physical conduct of a sexual nature, up to and including physical violence (e.g., touching, grabbing, pinching, body-rubbing, attempted or actual molestation, sexual assault or battery, indecent exposure, or rape);
- f) Sexually explicit or offensive epithets or jokes, whether written or oral;
- g) Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to: whistling, leering, improper gestures or offensive remarks, including unwelcome comments about appearance, sexuality or sexual experience and inappropriate use of sexually explicit language in discussions or other forms of communication, including through email, social media or other online forums;
- h) Displaying, storing, recording, reproducing, forwarding, transmitting or arranging to receive pornographic, sexually oriented or sexually suggestive images, objects, sound

recordings, text, publications or materials at AIUSA-related events, or using AIUSA equipment, facilities or services, including but not limited to AIUSA's various internet and social media platforms, such as its website, Facebook page, and twitter account.

3. Retaliation

No person shall engage in acts or threats of retaliation, reprisal, harassment, discrimination or intimidation against any individual who, in good faith, reports any suspected discrimination, harassment or any other violation of this Code; pursues any complaint or claim; cooperates in any related investigations, or otherwise opposes conduct in violation of this Code; participates in legally protected activities, such as reporting or filing a claim of harassing conduct, discrimination, or retaliation, fraud, waste or abuse; participates in whistleblower proceedings; provides evidence in any investigation; or intervenes to protect others who may have suffered harassing conduct, discrimination or retaliation.

Retaliatory actions are broadly defined to include, but are not limited to, harassing behavior, significant changes to job duties or working or volunteering conditions, **communications or other actions which are intended to or have the effect of intimidating a person**, or threats to take or initiate personnel action.

Any person who becomes aware of any instance or threat of retaliation, harassment, **intimidation** or discrimination in violation of this Code as described above should report it promptly to a supervisor, representative of Human Resources and/or complete the incident using the AIUSA Ethics Complaint Form **[link]**.

4. False or Frivolous Complaints

Claims of false or frivolous complaints asserted under this Code may themselves be the subject of a complaint under the Code and, if found to be lacking any good faith basis following an investigation by the Ethics Committee, may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

5. Urgent Matters

Where conduct that violates the Code is occurring that is causing immediate or risk of imminent harm of a serious nature, any Party at risk of suffering such harm may seek immediate relief on a temporary basis from the Ethics Committee based upon a credible showing of the need for such relief as set forth in this specific form [link]. The Ethics Committee will address any such request within three business days and will grant emergency relief (in the form of an appropriate directive) for a period lasting up to a maximum of fifteen days. If any Party seeks

relief for any longer period of time, such relief should be sought by following the procedures outlined in the Code of Conduct Complaint Review Protocol. Thereafter, if the Ethics Committee deems it necessary, additional periods of immediate relief on a temporary basis (not to exceed fifteen days) may be provided based, in each such additional instance, on a credible showing of the need for such relief, pending the final outcome of the Complaint Review Process of that Party's underlying Complaint. To ensure the overall soundness and fairness of the Ethics Committee's handling of "Urgent Matters" submitted to it, the Governance Committee of the Board, through a subcommittee comprised of the Board Vice Chair, the Chief Legal Officer and a designee of the union shop stewards, will review on or shortly after January 1 and July 1 of each year the Ethics Committee's disposition of all such matters during the preceding six months. The review will be limited to determining whether the process for handling such matters requires changes (as opposed to reconsideration of any specific decisions).

6. ~~DISCIPLINE~~ Disposition of a Complaint

Following the conclusion of the Complaint Review Process at all levels (including possible review by the Ombudsperson and the Board of Directors), the investigation of a Complaint can result in the following determinations:

- A. No violation of the Code of Conduct has been found. The complaining Party and any other person involved with respect to the complaint may be referred to Amnesty's Conflict Management Assistance Group or similarly qualified party for assistance in post-complaint resolution.
- B. A violation of the Code of Conduct has been found based upon a preponderance of all the relevant evidence. In such cases, the party found to have committed a violation shall be subject to any of the following correction actions:
 - (i) Written warning, which can clearly define the improper conduct, clarify expectations of proper conduct, prescribe an action plan for improved conduct and provide notice of further corrective action if any unacceptable conduct ensues.
 - (ii) Suspension, which can include any of the foregoing plus any protective measures needed to limit the likelihood or impact of improper conduct such as, but not limited to, limitations or restrictions on activities or communications that the party who acted improperly is permitted to engage in within AIUSA, whether with respect to staff, members or volunteers. Such

limitations or restrictions should be tailored as to their scope or duration commensurate with the degree of improper conduct that is found.

- (iii) Discharge, which can include termination from employment, cancellation of membership, or disqualification from certain AIUSA activities.

[**DELETE:** Any Party who is found, as a result of an investigation, to have violated this Code will be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from a verbal or written warning, up to and including possible removal from AIUSA position(s) including where applicable employment with AIUSA, suspension or cancellation of membership or disqualification from participation in AIUSA-related activities]. In addition, where there is a good faith basis for believing that the action under investigation violates any applicable federal, state or local law, statute or regulation, AIUSA will promptly refer the matter at issue to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

7. Filing a Complaint

The procedure for filing a complaint to address a violation of this Code applies to all Parties except: (a) if a Complaint involves Parties to any collective bargaining agreement between AIUSA and any union or other group of employees, any applicable provision of that agreement which provides for addressing any particular complaint involving such employee will control over any conflicting provision of the AIUSA **Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol**; and/or (b) if any federal, state or local law, statute or regulation applies to disposition of any particular complaint, it will control over any conflicting provision of the AIUSA **Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol**.

Any person who is subject to behavior they believe violates this Code, has witnessed such behavior or otherwise has reason to believe that an individual has violated this Code and has decided in this course of action should complete the AIUSA **Code of Conduct Complaint Form** ([link](#)) and either (a) email the completed form to the Chair of the AIUSA Ethics Committee at ethics@aiusa.org or (b) if preserving anonymity is a concern, print out and mail the completed form to the Chair of the Ethics Committee addressed to the New York City office of AIUSA:

Amnesty International USA Headquarters
311 W. 43rd Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10036
ATTN: Chair, Ethics Committee

However, in those instances where the Ethics Committee Chair is the subject of the complaint, the submission should be directed to the Vice Chair of the Ethics Committee or any other

member of the Ethics Committee not identified as a subject of the complaint. In the event the Complaint present a potential conflict of interest for any Ethics Committee member, regardless of when it is raised or by whom, the conflict of interest should be documented and the affected individual shall be excluded from any involvement in the review process. If the affected individual objects to being excluded from any involvement in the review process, the question of whether such exclusion shall occur shall be decided by a majority vote of the unaffected members of the Committee.

[DELETE: APPENDIX A –] Link to: Code of Conduct Complaint Form

Required Contact Information				
Name (First / Last)		Phone/Cell #		
Amnesty role or affiliation (e.g., director, officer, employee, intern or fellow, local group, country specialist, member at large etc.)				
Email Address				
Mailing Address				
City		State	Zip Code	

Complaint Information	
[DELETE: Date(s) of incident]	
Relevant provision in AIUSA Code of Conduct (if known)	

<p>Who is engaging in the Code of Conduct violation? (“Who” can be a person, an office, a committee, a department or any other entity).</p>	
<p>Witness(es) if any</p>	
<p>Other complainant(s) if any in addition to yourself</p>	
<p>[DELETE: Place(s) incident occurred]</p>	
<p>Please describe in detail the Code of Conduct violation you are experiencing. It is helpful to provide date(s), location(s), event(s) and other information about what is happening to you.</p>	
<p>Actions, if any, previously taken to address the complaint.</p> <hr/> <p>Any concerns regarding retaliation relating to the underlying complaint</p>	
<p>What do you hope to see as the resolution of your concern about the Code of Conduct?</p>	
<p>Are you aware whether the person who you believe is violating the Code of Conduct has done so in the same or similar way in the past?</p>	

Supporting documentation (please list here and attach to this form).	
E-Signature	
Date	