UKRAINE ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT:
KEY FINDINGS AND LEARNINGS RELATING TO THE
AUGUST 4 PRESS RELEASE ON UKRAINE

1. Background

In the interest of learning valuable lessons from the events surrounding the 4 August 2022 extended press release on Ukraine, the International Board (IB) appointed an independent assessment team (the review team), which submitted two reports: a review of the planning and decision-making around the production and launch of the press release and in the immediate aftermath; and a learning review, which identifies key measures needed to embed organizational change. A third report was produced by a panel of eminent international humanitarian law experts (the legal panel), which was commissioned by the Secretary General to review the legal findings of the press release.

This document, issued by the International Board, consolidates the principal learnings drawn from these three reports and from subsequent discussions, and presents recommendations for change based on these learnings. Timelines covering the preparation and aftermath of the press release are included as an appendix.

The International Board wishes to thank all of the stakeholders across the movement who contributed to this process. We also owe special thanks to the reviewers, and the members of the Crisis Incident Management Team (CIMT) who oversaw their work and provided comments and advice on the way forward. In close coordination with the Coalition Leadership Team (CLT), we will now prepare a comprehensive action plan to address these recommendations and will continue to give these learnings and follow-up actions our attention as a standing item in future sessions of both Board and CLT meetings.

2. Methodology

The review team consulted data sources which included interviews, written electronic correspondence and other documents provided to the reviewers. A dedicated email address was established to enable internal Amnesty stakeholders to submit any information they thought would be relevant. This email address remained open until 13 January 2023, and 40 submissions were received. The review team carried out confidential interviews with 38 people.

The legal panel reviewed numerous emails relating to the drafting of the press release, successive drafts of the press release, and internal documents that set out the confidential evidence on which the press release was based. The legal panel conducted extensive interviews, via Teams and Zoom, with most of the Amnesty staff members involved in drafting and reviewing the press release. The full text of the legal review is available here (Legal Review), some findings relevant to organizational learning are also included in this document.

3. Context

Amnesty is an international organization with sections and national offices in more than 70 countries. The International Secretariat (IS) is composed of offices in London and 15 other locations around the world. The Secretary General is the chief executive of the IS and the operational leader of the

Amnesty movement. The Secretary General reports to the International Board (IB), which is elected by the Amnesty Global Assembly, which is made up of representatives from national sections.

Amnesty was present in Ukraine though a representative office of the IS. Their staff were IS staff, and the Director of Amnesty Ukraine reported to the Regional Director (RD) of the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO). There were plans for Amnesty Ukraine to transition to a national office in 2023, but they were not carried out because of the invasion of Ukraine. EECARO is the IS regional office with overall responsibility for research and advocacy on Ukraine, and the RD reports to the Senior Director (SD) of Regional Human Rights Impact (although during the time under review, the SD post was vacant and the regional offices reported to the Deputy Secretary General).

The Crisis Response Program (CRP) specializes in research during conflicts and crises; it also has a media team and a digital investigations team (including satellite imagery analysis) which includes the Evidence Lab. Between February and July 2022, they produced more than two dozen outputs documenting Russian violations, including indiscriminate attacks and war crimes (see Annex 1). CRP is part of the Research, Advocacy and Policy Directorate (RAP), as is the Law and Policy Program (LawPol), reporting to the SD RAP.

The Movement, Engagement and Partnerships Directorate (MEP) includes global fundraising, movement building and marketing and communications (MarComms, which is responsible for news and media). The IS's Global Security Team (GST), which covers risk assessment, mitigation and security measures for Amnesty staff and offices, reports to the Chief Financial Officer/Senior Director.

In January 2022, due to the severity of the external human rights crisis around the impending Russian invasion, the SD of RAP established a **Ukraine Crisis Coordination Team (UCCT)**, which served as the main coordination and decision-making mechanism for substantive work on, and strategic oversight of, the Ukraine crisis response. It met weekly, chaired by the SD, and convened representatives from across the IS, including EECARO, ERO, MarComms, Finance, Crisis, Campaigns, Fundraising, Relief, LawPol, and Refugees and Migrants Team.

4. Key findings and learnings

This consolidated document seeks to provide responses to the far-reaching questions posed in the Terms of Reference for the Ukraine Press Release Review, with wide organizational implications for addressing internal and external crisis situations. This process offers a welcome basis on which to strengthen Amnesty's ability to deliver human rights change, and to do so with credibility and authority. In particular, it offers important lessons for relationships and communication within the movement, and for operating policies and standards, and identifies changes needed to strengthen our working methods and improve our internal procedures.

Working in accordance with Amnesty principles (including impartiality, independence, accuracy, mutual respect, inclusion)

A. Impartiality

Key findings:
The principle of impartiality was fundamental to decisions related to conducting the research, preparing the press release, and publishing it. Reporting on both sides of the military conflict, and doing so based on facts and evidence, independent of which party to the conflict was involved, was of

primary importance during the process leading up to the press release. Impartiality is also crucial for pursuing accountability, a key aim of the struggle against impunity. It was also noted that the desire to be impartial (following the publication of numerous research outputs on Russia's International humanitarian law (IHL) violations) was a driver for publishing the press release. There was also some internal discussion about the challenges around being impartial in a situation where one's country has been attacked and one is suffering from personal losses. The perceived limits of impartiality in such situations, as well as security concerns, seems to have influenced the extent to which Amnesty Ukraine was consulted and involved in the planning and drafting process.

The legal review (available here) reiterated that IHL applies equally to all sides to an international armed conflict, including the party that is clearly the victim of aggression. It is entirely appropriate for a human rights organization to criticize violations of IHL by a state that is a victim of aggression. The equal application of IHL to Russia and Ukraine means that a human rights organization like Amnesty may and must criticize IHL violations by both sides impartially. It does not mean, however, that both sides may or must be criticized to the same degree and extent if one commits more serious and systematic violations.

Learning:
Amnesty's policy on Impartiality, Independence, and non-partisanship can provide guidance going forward. It states that 'researching abuses by one party to an armed conflict often requires we should research abuses by the other' and that being 'consistent in our approach will mean speaking out about abuses by particular actors even when this would have negative consequences for Amnesty or may not be strategic to achieve change in that country'. On the other hand, Amnesty 'should not, in the name of impartiality, provide equal space and prominence in its outputs to violations committed by two parties to a conflict if a far greater number of violations have been carried out by one party to the conflict'.[1] Accordingly, it is important that Amnesty be impartial in documenting human rights violations, but it is equally important to ensure that the human rights violations of parties to a conflict be put into context. This may require greater collaboration in the future, and listening to concerns from those affected, to ensure that questions about balance are not too quickly dismissed in the name of impartiality.

B. **Independence**

The principle of independence has been respected. The review team did not come across any concern about, or reference to, undue influence from external or internal actors, although there was evidence of an imbalance of influence in the internal power structures detailed later in this report.

C. **Accuracy**

Key Findings:
The principle of accuracy includes presenting evidence for assertions and conclusions, conducting adequate corroboration and doing a sound political and legal analysis. It is also clear that, even though shorter outputs will be more condensed, 'we must be able to back up our conclusions if challenged'[2].

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[1] Policy note on impartiality, independence and non-partisanship; AI Index: POL 30/2035/2020
[2] Quality Assurance Framework, 2015 AI Index No: ORG 10/2704/2015

The legal review (available here) found that the press release's principal factual finding – that Ukrainian armed forces placed themselves in civilian objects in the proximity of civilians who remained in these areas, including hospitals and abandoned schools – was reasonably substantiated by the evidence presented. However, a principal legal finding of the PR – that Ukrainian forces failed to take precautions to the maximum extent feasible to protect civilians in their areas of operation – was found to have been made in overly emphatic terms. Amnesty would have been justified in concluding that Ukrainian forces *could* or *might* have violated IHL, but the conclusion that they *did* violate IHL was too categorical. Amnesty lacked sufficient information to *categorically* conclude that evacuations were *feasible* in the circumstances and thus that Ukraine had violated its obligations under IHL. The finding should have been made in more conditional terms, such as that Ukrainian forces *could* or *might* have violated IHL.

According to the legal panel, many of these problems stem from the format of the publication, its very limited word count, and the legal analysis being insufficiently developed; there was a lack of sufficient detail and evidence about the specific episodes. The format also meant that loose, varying, non-technical, and non-legal language open to misunderstanding was employed.

The review team was told that a sentence in the press release referring to corroboration with satellite imagery was inaccurate, as it indicated that satellite imagery analysis was used to corroborate details around co-location. The satellite imagery assessed did not confirm co-location, instead it confirmed destruction around sites where the Amnesty researchers had been eyewitnesses to co-location. The inaccurate sentence should have been moved elsewhere in the press release, or removed prior to publication as requested by the Evidence Lab.

Learning:
In general, the legal panel, which had access to unpublished information and case materials, did not challenge the underlying factual findings of the press release – that co-location was taking place. However, given the internal questions raised during the press release review process and after the publication, it is clear that a more complete and detailed discussion of the evidence and findings should have been included in the output itself.

The legal panel did, however, question other aspects of the findings, including, for example, the use of the word 'pattern'. More attention should be paid going forward in all outputs as to whether cases are representative and how to use samples credibly, and as to whether there is sufficient corroborating evidence. In addition, since we must be willing to defend our findings publicly, we should also be willing to defend them internally; internal questions should warn us that similar questions may arise from the public. In all outputs, when questions are raised internally, there must be a process available whereby the facts underlying them can be discussed and reviewed in more detail, as an aid to improving the output, not as a challenge to the professionalism or quality of the underlying research or its technical findings.

Output format: A briefing paper or report would have been the best format for this output, rather than a press release. Amnesty should commit, going forward, to using briefing papers or reports (with longer word counts and dedicated legal sections) particularly when working on complicated areas of IHL and International human rights law (IHRL), or where there may be special political sensitivities, as in this case. Careful use of language, and reliance on technical and legal language, should remain central to the drafting and review of such outputs.

Legal Interpretation: Whatever the size of the output, it must include sufficient legal and policy information to satisfy basic human rights standards. Further, for any complicated/nuanced issue of

IHL/IHRL in which there are competing interpretations, Amnesty needs to be explicit as to its interpretation of the law. This may nuance the message and make it less 'punchy', which may result in less media traction/visibility. In this instance, a longer and more detailed presentation of the law and context would have strengthened the overall argument.

D. Mutual respect and Inclusion

Key findings:
The principles of mutual respect and inclusion seem to apply more to internal behaviour, processes, and ways of working. The review team noted accounts of people not feeling respected, and also how some felt excluded (or not genuinely listened to or heard) from decisions that concerned them. It is difficult to say if that means that these principles have not been adhered to. For example, inclusion can cover areas of being 'represented' and that aspect seems to have been arranged structurally only after Amnesty Ukraine learned about the planned publication date for the press release. What is certain is that there is a perception of a lack of mutual respect and inclusion, and based on this perception, one could conclude that these principles have not been fully adhered to in practice.

The initial decision to publish the research findings was made without consulting Amnesty Ukraine, although CRP and EECARO discussed the proposed output on 5 July. Amnesty Ukraine was directly consulted only after the press release was drafted and did not see the press release itself until 22 July, when the text was more or less finalized. Keeping Amnesty Ukraine at a distance from the press release was felt to be a way of providing them some protection from negative reactions, as they would be able to deny involvement in producing the press release. There was awareness that this press release would be controversial, and the failure to proactively seek Amnesty Ukraine's viewpoint and contextual understanding (including of the power of the dispersed yet cohesive Ukrainian diaspora) was a significant lost opportunity, which also resulted in feelings of disrespect and exclusion.

Learning:
One principle that would need clarification is that entitled **One Amnesty (subsidiarity),** which places emphasis on the importance of including national and regional expertise in discussions around campaign and advocacy messaging. The existing definition of **subsidiarity** in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is unclear and should be unpacked in terms of behaviours, mechanisms, and processes.

The review team noted that plans for achieving impact should always be based on the capabilities and relationships available in any given context. The staff of teams and entities most directly affected should be included early in the consultative process to share knowledge and advice, where this can be done safely. This should not affect the evidence, analysis and claims brought forth in the output, but could influence framing, timing, and pre-publication preparation. There should be a clear and accessible mechanism for all relevant staff to raise concerns about an output and the risks associated with it.

E. The quality assurance framework (QAF)

Key Findings:
Both the legal panel and the review team found that the quality assurance process followed was inadequate. The pre-output planning process (an essential feature of the quality assurance framework) was not effective. The research on Ukrainian forces' conduct was not planned in advance; rather, it

happened organically as CRP researchers were gathering information on Russian war crimes and repeatedly came upon Ukrainian troops located in civilian areas. As such, a pre-output planning meeting could not have taken place prior to the research; however, it could have taken place when it was clear that the research was leading to an output with new content.

Moreover, a clear chain of review was missing. The existing QA process provides for a three-stage review process. In this case, the draft press release was shared between CRP staff who had relevant expertise, and multiple people made comments and raised concerns. The document was sent for LawPol review while this commenting process was still underway, and two drafts were reviewed by EECARO managers, who also provided comments in the document. It is difficult to pinpoint who had the sign-off at different stages of the press release preparation. Moreover, a number of IS staff reviewed and commented on the draft press release (including the Secretary General) without knowing what previous reviewers had said or disagreed with. Several people expressed concerns, warned of risks, and made suggestions for change to the process and the press release. This sometimes happened on group emails and often happened bilaterally. Some of the feedback received was taken into account, but much was not; and there was no central document or process that took stock of the feedback holistically and made that visible for all decision makers, including the final reviewers.

Learning:

The QA framework is currently under revision. At minimum, the process should ensure that there is an underlying theory of change for each output, so that the format sought is appropriate to the impact expected. It is important to ensure *pre-output planning,* bringing together key stakeholders to agree on roles, decision-making, timelines, and risk assessment. The chain of review must be agreed in advance. The exact approvals needed, and the sequencing of these approvals, ought to be clear and communicated, and any changes in the process should be agreed and shared with key persons in advance. Any derogation for crisis or other emergency research and reporting should be codified, and the review sequence clarified at the outset, when the output is agreed.

The existing Quality Assurance process lacks a clear and detailed procedure for recording and escalating any disagreements over content. While it says that any disagreement must be reviewed with the 'relevant line manager/reviewer' and referred to the respective supervisors for a decision, in practice this allows the line manager to determine what to do with any disagreements, including whether to inform other reviewers about them. The revised QA framework should provide for a clear escalation process, and require a full record to be kept of all concerns raised at each stage of the review process, including disagreements, so that later and/or final approvers are able to see which issues have been raised and how they were resolved.

F. Pre-release actions, including stakeholder involvement, risk mitigation plan, risk assessment to all parties, other areas the fact finding may raise

Key findings:

Several key decisions made about the press release were shaped by a view that the conduct of Ukrainian forces was a relatively minor matter compared to the much greater scale of Russian war crimes. This perspective led to a significant underestimation of the need for thorough preparation for backlash. No holistic risk analysis was conducted to consider how Amnesty's documentation of violations by Ukrainian forces would be received against the backdrop of Ukraine's necessity to defend itself other than noting that both Human Rights Watch and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had released similar findings over previous weeks without a backlash. It was also clear that no one predicted the intensity of the negative reaction. The Global Security Team (GST) did assess risks from a staff safety and security point

of view but, beyond this, there was no holistic analysis of the risks of publishing. Some mitigation measures were agreed: sending a right of reply letter to the Ukrainian government; hiring a Ukrainian public relations agency to help with crisis communications; and agreeing not to translate the press release into Russian or proactively disseminate it to Ukrainian media. In the end, the ease of automatic digital translations on social media may have made some of these measures ineffective.

Learning:
The development of a comprehensive global strategy for work on Ukraine could have helped to situate research on the conduct of Ukrainian forces against the broader context of IHL violations by Russian forces in Ukraine. It could also have helped guide the considerations on whether the Ukrainian government could have been engaged in the need to change its practices, and the extent to which this process could be conducted impartially. The absence of such a strategy left a vacuum in which the press release was drafted.

Similarly, a holistic risk analysis could have considered multiple risk scenarios and enabled better planning and preparation on many fronts: (i) ensuring sufficient time for a possible reply from the Ministry of Defence; (ii) paying careful attention to the use of words like 'tactics' in the headline; (iii) providing early warning and sufficient preparation time and material to sections; and (iv) considering whether to share the draft press release with Amnesty Ukraine earlier on in the process.

G. **Legal Analysis** [(Legal Review available here)](Legal Review available here)

Key findings (see also Section C. Accuracy):
In addition to the findings above on accuracy, the legal panel found that the legal and factual analysis set out in the PR was not sufficiently detailed and reasoned and that the PR should have set out the elements of the rules of IHL that it believed Ukraine had violated. The internal legal review should have been more rigorous and based on an underlying legal analysis memo. The legal panel also found that Amnesty could have made more meaningful attempts to engage with Ukrainian authorities, both to assess their analysis of the feasibility of positioning its forces in alternative locations, and to assess the feasibility of evacuations and issuing warnings to civilians. Without such engagement, findings of IHL violations should not have been made in categorical terms, although they could have been made in conditional terms. The legal panel felt that the legal and factual questions addressed were of such complexity that a more developed, cautious, and legally comprehensive analysis was necessary.

Learning (See also Section C. Accuracy):
A key factor in Amnesty's credibility as a human rights organization is the legal and factual analysis underlying our outputs. In order to retain that credibility, Amnesty outputs, from extended press releases to reports, should provide a well detailed and reasoned legal and policy underpinning. For shorter outputs, and particularly cases involving complex legal issues, a prior legal and factual analysis, such as an internal legal memo, could be prepared as a basis for drafting the public output.

The legal analysis should set out the appropriate elements of law and explain systematically how, in Amnesty's view, the evidence provided establishes each constituent element of the violation. It should seek to be as clear as possible for a range of audience, but not at the expense of precision and accuracy. The language of the legal analysis will by the nature of the arguments be legalistic and should remain so. The remainder of the output can rely on other non-technical language. It may be necessary to describe findings in conditional rather than categorical terms.

H. **Output format and tone**

Key findings:

The extended press release format was chosen because it was seen as an ideal vehicle to publish what researchers had already found without too much delay, although some staff members argued for a longer and more detailed briefing, given the amount of evidence that was available. The decision also reflected the view that the violations were significantly less serious than Russian war crimes, so the time invested in a longer format report would be better spent on investigating indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces. Likewise, the framing of the press release – to focus only on Ukrainian forces' IHL violations and not on both sides, which was also internally disputed – reflected the desire to get Amnesty's findings out quickly. There was a working assumption that Amnesty's record of documenting Russian violations since the outbreak of the war was extensive and unimpeachable, and that the press release would be read and understood in that specific context, rather than as a standalone output.

However, many of these assumptions proved to be incorrect. The extended press release format was problematic not only in terms of the word limit imposed, but also because the tone and writing style sacrificed legal and factual precision. Parts of the press release were written in language that was ambiguous, imprecise, and in some respects legally questionable.

Learning:

Decisions on output format must be driven by strategy and plans for impact. An extended press release may not be suitable for publishing new or sensitive research, particularly not with the current 1700-word restriction, as the format does not allow for the nuance and depth required to provide the necessary evidence, specific context, legal analysis, and case detail.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the format: an extended press release can be an appropriate way to respond quickly to specific violations, **but it should be the exception and not the norm**. Briefing papers or reports (with longer word counts and dedicated legal sections) provide the appropriate scope for well-documented evidence, and an underlying legal analysis. Furthermore, even where extended press releases are used, the word-count restrictions should be flexible, and allow for the necessary legal analysis and presentation of evidence.

I. Right of Reply

Key Findings:

The issue of 'right of reply' was discussed at length; providing the Ukrainian government with a right of reply was initially perceived by some as unnecessary, both because this had not always been required for an extended press release, and because the recent experience of other organizations in Ukraine indicated that no reply would be made. The Amnesty Ukraine Director felt strongly that a right to reply was important and set out her concerns in an email on 14 July, suggesting that dialogue with the Ukrainian government would help Amnesty achieve its overall goal of protecting civilians, and would help mitigate other risks of publication that had been identified. This was followed up by a discussion with key stakeholders on 15 July, in which a decision was made to send a right of reply letter to the Minister of Defence. However, the letter was not sent (emailed) until 27 July, and this lengthy delay left only five working days to secure a full response, even if the MOD had been willing to make one. The review team and the legal panel both found that this was inadequate, and that trying to secure a response from the Ukrainian government should have been a greater priority. The review team concluded that the time given to the Ukrainian authorities seemed to have been based on Amnesty's media calendar and by the deadline of sharing the press release (under embargo) with sections.

In addition, the legal panel recommended that Amnesty should endeavour to engage more with states not only in the right to reply stage, but also while conducting its research. Such engagement may be particularly important for findings of violations of the rules on the conduct of hostilities, because these rules operate on the basis of assessing what the commander in the field intended, knew or anticipated. 'Without information from the armed forces,' the legal panel noted, 'it is impossible to categorically determine that a violation of the rules governing the conduct of hostilities has occurred unless there are other clear indications based on patterns of conduct or other circumstantial evidence.'

Learning:

Providing a right of reply to states, corporations or other entities accused of human rights violations is a common practice of international organizations and NGOs working in the human rights arena. Amnesty's approach to giving the state under consideration a right of reply should be well understood by all relevant staff, rather than perceived as relevant only in the case of certain types of research outputs. The existing guidelines on right of reply indicate that 'It is essential to give targets a fair and reasonable Right of Reply to a final draft of all planned outputs'; and that 'the agreed approach and schedule should be set out in the Pre-Output Template for each report.' The guidelines also note that any decision not to provide a right of reply, should be 'an exceptional case … based on strong, documented rationale'. These guidelines should be reviewed and updated to ensure that extended press releases and other reactive outputs are explicitly covered, and that decisions about right of reply are based on content and expected impact, rather than format. These standards and procedures should be clear at the start of preparation of the output. It should not be discussed only when the output is already under way.

Amnesty International should also ensure that states are given realistic time frames for response in the right of reply process. For instance, while it would be naïve to expect that all government targets will respond, there are cases in which there is potential for a reply or engagement, and Amnesty should provide extra time when doing so will increase the likelihood of impact. For the Ukraine press release, a clear strategy and theory of change at the start of the preparation of the output would have facilitated the right to reply decision and how it was carried out.

J. **International Secretariat (IS) communications strategy including social and mainstream media engagement, monitoring, responsiveness: what could have been done differently / better?**

Key Findings:

The press release launched on 4 August but had only been shared with Amnesty sections on 2 August (under embargo), with the supporting Q&A sent late the following evening. Beyond the Q&A, there was no warning or advice about the potentially controversial nature of the contents. The press release was posted at a minute past midnight on the 4th, and the negative reactions from within Ukraine were quickly underway, as it reportedly circulated rapidly on Russian and Ukrainian Telegram channels. After it was posted on Amnesty's Twitter account at approximately 0900 BST, the backlash intensified. The review team described the backlash for Amnesty Ukraine as 'harsh, swift and unrelenting'. Amnesty Ukraine lost partners, and was sharply criticized by government leaders, including President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In terms of communications needs, once the press release had been launched, there were starkly different contexts to consider, including countries where the press release received little attention,

and countries where Amnesty was under very intense pressure to respond to demands from media, members, partners, and the public. It included contexts where death threats were being received and where pickets and demonstrations happened outside Amnesty offices, some for extended periods of time. The backlash in some contexts was exacerbated by false information that was disseminated about Amnesty's research methods, including the claim that the press release was based on statements taken from people in Russian custody. The context also included situations where the press release was welcomed either because it was perceived as balanced reporting or because the press release was shared in countries where public opinion was more in favour of Russia.

The Secretary General, responding to harsh backlash she had received[3], tweeted a message that implied that the negative feedback was orchestrated by 'social media mobs and trolls'. This exacerbated the negative reaction, as did a statement posted on Facebook by the Amnesty Ukraine Director. This statement opened a new internal dimension to the story that generated further interest on social media and in the international news media. The Director announced her resignation the following day on Facebook, and it took effect on 26 September 2022.

As the backlash gathered pace, the advice was to not engage directly in interviews, to not 'fuel the fire'. For many Amnesty sections this was not helpful or possible. This global advice was 'modified' as the Lines of Response were issued from the IS, and sections could adapt to their context. There was frustration and nervousness from sections that were hardest hit. Some sections felt that not engaging meant that many questions remained unanswered and allowed 'false' narratives to develop.

There is a strong sense that there was a lack of understanding of the quite varying needs of the sections and that a more nuanced engagement strategy should have been considered. There was direct outreach by senior officials in IS and peers in Amnesty to sections most negatively affected by the backlash from the press release, with offers of support and intervention. There were also efforts to communicate to all sections with one message, both through emails and by setting up meetings. There was a sense that the IS was slow in responding to the demands/needs of the sections and that the instructions to 'not engage' were not helpful for all.

Learning:
The agility and effectiveness of any post-release response is directly related to the quality of pre-release preparation. A solid risk analysis should identify where backlash is likely, and where to focus adequate advance planning and strategic advice to ensure the best possible preparation. Sections and national offices should be treated as partners in the context of communication strategies, as the communication and engagement strategy should be adapted to each specific context.

Preparations should also consider that leaders of sections could be individually targeted and held responsible for actions taken by other parts of the organization. Therefore, it is crucial to support them in the 'One Amnesty' approach, especially against pressure coming through social media. Once a crisis is underway, it may be too late to meaningfully involve key stakeholders in sections

In dealing with a crisis, a single communications/message to all sections and entities may not be the right approach, as appropriate reactions in one context are not useful in another.

Further reflection is needed on the use of social media by prominent individuals within Amnesty, especially with respect to Twitter and Facebook. Social media is a powerful mechanism to engage and

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[3] Some of the backlash, but not all, was toxic and personally threatening.

to spread information, and to further the public discourse on human rights issues. However, the question is how this is managed – should it be a personal method of communication (qualified by 'views are my own' on the Twitter bio or public Facebook page) or should it be part of the broader communication strategy of the whole movement?

There are pros and cons to both approaches – using social media directly or having it be managed as part of the general communications strategy of the organization. On the one hand, personal communication is often more distinctive and compelling, and increases the chances of engagement with other users, for quick replies and retweets, and thus increases the chance of being heard. On the other hand, the risk of mistakes, inappropriate words, inaccuracies, disclosure of sensitive information concerning methods of operation or other errors, is relatively high.

Guidelines on use of personal social media accounts should be revised. Social media managers and communicators could also be used to guide personal messaging and to curate posts in crisis situations.

K. **Was meaningful involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process taken into account?**

Key findings:
In short, the answer is no, but it needs to be qualified with a few important issues and nuances. There were several moments, platforms and processes that included key stakeholders. In addition to the strategic oversight body, the Ukraine Crisis Coordination Team (UCCT), other processes were put in place, such as the Ukraine Crisis Incident Management Team (CIMT), which focused on staff security and well-being, particularly in the context of the evacuation of staff of Amnesty Ukraine's office, and in ensuring their ongoing security abroad, as well as the security of Amnesty staff based in or conducting research in Ukraine.

There were also ad hoc meetings arranged to address concerns and agree on ways forward, and other channels and platforms to seek people's input. Email, for instance, allows putting people in copy or removing people from an exchange. Sometimes the 'putting in copy' is a horizontal inclusion of different experts to widen the perspective, and sometimes it is a hierarchical inclusion for including an 'approver' or authority figure. The review team noted that the inclusion of an authority figure (or a reference to one) often has the effect of limiting engagement or silencing feedback. In that a considerable number of exchanges, decisions and approvals were done over email (and sometimes in bilateral Teams calls and chats), the dynamics of email exchanges is an area to consider when looking at inclusion.

A word in the question that is important to note is the word 'meaningful'. Here the opinions are divided among the stakeholders interviewed. Some consider that there were opportunities for stakeholders to express themselves and to raise issues that would be taken into account in the decision making. Others consider that, while there were moments for input and consultations, their concerns were not heard, and alternatives were not seriously considered. For example, an email (July 12) from the Secretary General congratulating the researchers and underscoring the importance of the findings left Amnesty Ukraine with a sense that the key decisions were already made, that while there was listening there was a lack of hearing. After their initial concerns were not seriously considered, a sense of resignation set in, and they felt their only available course of action was to try and introduce some mitigation measures, including dialogue with the Ukrainian government (see right of reply, above).

In the context of post press release responses, after resolution of initial critical situations in some Amnesty sections, some concerns sent by e-mails were left without any response, leaving these sections with the feeling that their concerns were not being heard.

So, while the answer to the question may be that while some of the relevant stakeholders were formally involved in decision-making before 4 August 4, there are still questions about whether or not that engagement was 'meaningful'; and although there were sincere efforts made (especially in the post-August 4 time period) to meaningfully involve key stakeholders in sections, these efforts fell short of being fully effective.

Learning:
Crisis responses require meaningful involvement of all stakeholders in the preparation, planning, coordination, and decision-making. When there is an internal or external crisis, or impending crisis, Amnesty often creates a variety of platforms and processes that include key stakeholders. Multiple ad hoc processes can lead to confusion and overlap. Instead, a single coordination or crisis management team should be established as soon as possible, to formulate and share contingency plans, and to coordinate the substantive organizational and strategic response. Smaller and more focused groups may be needed to address particular issues, such as security or communications, but they should always report back to the main coordination team, so that someone can maintain an overview. Even where an effective central coordination team is established and includes the 'right' range of stakeholders, this does not always ensure 'meaningful' involvement. The UCCT, for example, did not discuss or produce any risk analysis or mitigation measures for the press release.

Uneven power dynamics can mean that not all stakeholders have an equal opportunity for input and consultation, some feel that their concerns are not heard, and their alternative suggestions are not seriously considered. For instance, the review team found that the Crisis Response Program seems to enjoy a special status within Amnesty, one that comes with deep respect and high expectations to produce from colleagues and the movement, but also one that gives it informal power and latitude to not always engage with other programs and entities in a collaborative way.

It is also important to correctly identify and engage 'relevant stakeholders'. Exactly who that includes can be subjective, and changes over time, depending on the actions planned or proposed. Consideration of 'relevant stakeholders' must include sections and other entities, as well as governance bodies. Section staff were largely absent from the processes linked to decision-making. For example, it seems clear that sections should have been included in getting a better picture of the risk landscape surrounding the publication of the press release, especially given the large numbers of Ukrainian refugees hosted in various European countries, as well as strong presence of Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, United States or Australia.

In the context of responding to external crises, a clearly articulated global strategy and a theory of change should determine how to situate research, campaigning, and advocacy. This should be accompanied by a holistic risk analysis, which considers multiple risk scenarios across multiple jurisdictions and different time zones and enables integrated planning and preparation across the movement.

Where there is a risk of backlash to specific sections and other entities, advance warning and timely preparation of materials and strategies is crucial, and must be tailored to different national and regional circumstances. The One Amnesty principle places emphasis on the importance of including national and regional expertise in discussions around impact and messaging.

L. Culture and relationships

Key findings:
The review team heard a variety of views and concerns on these concepts, some noting that issues here are long-standing. The key concerns expressed were: listening without hearing; lack of respect for different skills and perspectives; some functions being more valued than others; power imbalances amongst IS teams, and between national entities and IS teams; lack of trust in people's ability; lack of attention to staff being overworked and reaching burnout; dismissing the views of others, and hesitation to speak out. That some of these views about Amnesty culture seem to be persistent is worrying, as such negative feelings can affect people's health, wellbeing, commitment, creativity and, in the end, willingness/ability to stay in Amnesty. Yet people are driven by values of human rights and want to contribute to what they feel is important and meaningful work.

There were also positive developments, including many acts of solidarity and support across the movement. Important roles were played by Amnesty Poland and Amnesty Moldova in welcoming and supporting Amnesty Ukraine staff. IS Moscow office staff, who left their country after the invasion in February were also supported, including by Amnesty Finland. Amnesty Norway, Amnesty Belgium, Amnesty Netherlands, Amnesty Germany and Amnesty UK also worked closely with the IS CIMT in organizing the relocation of Amnesty Ukraine and Moscow office staff and their families, supporting and hosting some of them to this day. That acts of solidarity happen spontaneously in times of crisis is not uncommon, as people rush to help. The question has been raised how this solidarity is practiced when there is not a situation of crisis, what shape can it take to be constructive. There may also be concerns that acts of solidarity, of giving, can reinforce power patterns that already exist. However, changing the focus here from 'support' to 'solidarity' may be a way forward as it can decouple resources from the act itself.

In some Amnesty entities, the crisis showed an insufficient level of understanding of how the AI movement works (including organization, relationship between different sections, and IS programs). For some sections, people holding key positions may not have long experience with crisis situations. Furthermore, Amnesty's complicated organizational structure is not understood by external viewers. Public opinion considers people holding key positions in Amnesty sections (e.g. directors and presidents of boards) as leaders and therefore responsible for Amnesty's words and actions, whereas they may have had little involvement or understanding of the issues involved in the crisis situation.

As noted, many people interviewed by the review team indicated that Amnesty culture generated the situation leading up to and following the publication of the press release. This includes fear of speaking up, futility of speaking up, not being heard, taking the path of least resistance after previous experiences of not being heard, concentration of power in some locations and in some highly regarded units, some people's views carrying more weight than others, behaviours shaped by a center-and-periphery dynamic, and assumptions made on the basis of people's past behaviours.

Learning:
The key learning is that Amnesty needs to improve its internal culture. It takes more than a policy and a training to achieve that. Behaviours and values are integrated into day-to-day performance , but how are people supported to change? Change requires the capacity, the motivation, and the opportunity to change, and that is both at an individual level and at an organizational level. Capacity is not enough. Wanting to change is not enough. There is a need for concrete opportunities to change and such change should be recognized and rewarded, as well as reflected in strategies for sustained change, which include KPIs and incorporation into assessment frameworks

Managing dissent: When colleagues raise significant substantive concerns about an output or course of action, there is seldom space to slow down and talk things through to try to find consensus. Although there are always pressures to produce, and to produce on time, getting something right, with the appropriate nuance, is more important than speed.

Amnesty's internal deliberative processes do not ensure that dissent is adequately considered and resolved. The Quality Assurance process, for instance, allows for discussion; although it is formally linear, it more often works as an iterative process, and should facilitate healthy debate. But it is also possible for this deliberative process to be treated as an obstacle to surmount, so that the human rights goal at hand—to effect positive change—is conflated with a process goal of finalizing an output. If seen as no more than a series of approvals, Quality Assurance can check all the necessary boxes without adequately addressing concerns and weaknesses.

When colleagues have reservations about a plan of action or an output, bilateral email exchanges are a poor substitute for informed discussions, in which the relevant stakeholders genuinely aim to reach consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached or colleagues feel they cannot be heard, there should be alternative internal channels to raise concerns about an output's findings or analysis, prior to publication. Where national entities are involved, the Senior Director responsible for movement building should be involved in the resolution. If internal discussions are unable to address the concerns, or to find common ground, bringing in one or more relevant outside experts could be considered.

Decisions cannot all be democratic, and the nature of Amnesty's work means it must continue to speak about unpopular matters. It is imperative that Amnesty does not lose its ability to speak truth to power or to act as the watchdog for human rights around the world. The key is that there should be ways for staff, especially those closest to the issue or most likely to confront the fallout, to engage fully in making Amnesty's approach and outputs stronger and more effective, without fear or cynicism.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
These conclusions and recommendations for change consolidate and build on the learnings from the three review reports.

1. Quality assurance framework

The Quality Assurance Framework is currently being revised and this process should include discussion of two important and relevant policy changes. These changes are aligned with the spirit of the recommendations on quality assurance, hence they are mentioned in this section.

First, the QAF should contain a 'typology of written outputs' to give clear guidance on what the different outputs are and when to employ them. They should be broken down in terms of 'external' and 'internal' and not according to internal functional divisions. The 'extended press release' output should typically be commissioned on rare occasions, where researchers on the ground have uncovered fresh human rights violations that are relevant to the international news cycle and Amnesty wants to issue the information to media before writing a briefing or report. There should be an expectation that a more comprehensive output would normally follow an extended press release. It may be useful to rename this output to clarify that it will precede another output (briefing or report) rather than being an extension of the press release format.

A second line of work currently being undertaken is the finalization of a policy on 'evidence management' which will ensure 'secure and robust practices of evidence management, including the identification, storage, classification, organization and tracking of evidence'. No such policy has existed for many years and archiving practices have varied, so individual teams have largely decided on how to classify, store and manage evidence. This has resulted in a variety of disparate practices being developed. This policy was under consultation and so not in place during the period covered by the current review, but will be implemented in the coming months.

The Review Team identified issues arising in several areas.
- First, most people involved in the press release had different views on who was signing off at which point.
- Second, questions were raised about the adequacy of the evidence underlying claims made in the press release, and some who posed questions did not feel that the published press release addressed their concerns.
- Third, there were concerns raised that were dealt with one by one and the full aggregation of those concerns was not considered.
- Fourth, the 'first review' and the 'legal review' were not clearly separated, and the text evolved with input from different people.
- Fifth, it was clear internally that many other outputs relating to Russia's IHL violation had been published by Amnesty, but that was by no means an indicator that external audiences would read it in that broader context, or even read beyond the headline.

2. Social Media

The use of Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms for purposes of communication is a challenge for a number of organizations and persons holding high-level positions. Twitter, in particular, has become a major forum for international discourse and for sharing information. What became clear in the aftermath of 4 August is that, even though Twitter accounts may be personal and profiles may be qualified with 'views are my own,' this does not stop tweets being perceived and received as

representative of Amnesty. Especially in the heat of a crisis, everything that Amnesty leaders communicate publicly reflects on the organization.

As such, in sensitive cases the Secretary General and other key Amnesty leaders should not tweet (or post on other social media) without the review and advice of MarComms. While this may delay the time of reaction or response, it would enable unified and integrated communication of the whole movement. In order not to lose the special character of Twitter communication (to avoid bureaucratic tweets), MarComms should develop a strategy on how to provide for the most effective communication with a 'personal touch'.

Any social media strategies should be tailored and take into account the different jurisdictions in which Amnesty operates, including roles played by local leaders of Amnesty. They should be prepared to answer pertinent question related to the work of the whole movement, even if they were not authors of relevant outputs. But at the same time, their personal reputation and courage to work should not be put under undue pressure. It is especially important in times when social media shape the public discourse and when it is relatively easy to target any public figure.

3. Impact-led approach

While protecting civilian lives was ultimately the desired impact of Amnesty stakeholders, there was considerable disagreement about whether publishing the press release would advance this desired impact. Several key stakeholders argued strongly that publishing the press release, especially focused only on Ukrainian forces' conduct, would trigger a negative reaction and not lead to positive change with respect to protecting civilians (and possibly be counter-productive). They advocated for direct engagement and dialogue with the Ukrainian government instead. Others felt that it was important both to publish and to provide the right of reply to the Ukrainian government, while some argued that Amnesty had published extensively on Russia's IHL violations in Ukraine and had not engaged in direct dialogue with Russia, and that taking a different approach with respect to Ukrainian IHL violations witnessed by researchers would not be impartial and would not promote accountability. The latter argument was led by a desire to reinforce Amnesty's impartiality and hold the Ukrainian government accountable for locating troops in densely populated civilian areas. At the end of the day, Amnesty did not step back from the different arguments to consider what approach (or combination of approaches) would be the most effective in protecting civilians from harm.

Where there are offices or sections closest to the point of impact, the staff most directly affected (in the case of the August 4 press release, this would have been Amnesty Ukraine plus some sections likely to experience significant negative backlash) should be able to see the planned output early in the process to provide their advice. This should not affect the evidence, analysis and claims brought forth in the output, but could influence framing, timing and pre-publication preparation. There should be a clear and accessible mechanism for relevant staff to raise urgent concerns about an output and risks associated with it.

4. Escalating a conflict/disagreement

In addition to the system of flagging quality assurance concerns in the QAF, as recommended above, there should be an agreed and inclusive platform for raising and resolving issues. In situations like this, an intentional focus on a wider risk analysis could have surfaced points of tension and conflict earlier and put them in an organizational context and not as a 'relational' issue between perspectives. It could also have served as the mechanism to either resolve conflict well upstream or find a way to do that. In

the future, including this role in the remit of the strategy/coordination group, or other temporary structures, and ensuring that it has the right composition, is an idea to consider.

An 'escalation policy' has been announced and is under development. It is important to bear in mind the context in which such a policy would be introduced. The Review Team saw in the review that 'proper' channels were often used to raise concerns, such as through line management, directly with counterparts and in team meetings. An escalation policy that moves along the central hierarchy of the organization may not be the most effective manner to resolve issues, especially if that central hierarchy is perceived to be part of the issue to be resolved, and is likely to follow the 'line-management chain' of the concerned position in the IS. It seems also, that in the case of the August 4 press release, the issue at hand was also a strategic one where there were different opinions about the most effective way to achieve the desired impact. The recommendation here is for the escalation policy to stay clear of reinforcing a culture where hierarchy is the solution.

5. Risk analysis

Despite concerns being raised by different stakeholders involved in the process, there was no holistic risk analysis where all risk elements were brought into view. The risks around the safety of staff were acted on and coordinated by the Global Security Team, but the risks to the wider organization were not mapped and analyzed in an aggregated manner. Understandably, Amnesty cannot conduct extensive risk assessments for all its publications but, for cases like these, a quick but well considered risk analysis could have identified specific risks to mitigate and precautions to take. It could also have provided a space in which Amnesty Ukraine staff could have contributed their contextual understanding and helped map out the range of likely risks.

In future situations where a range of concerns are raised, there ought to be a cross-functional risk analysis of the possible impact of an output or action. The fact that the output is short (and that it is not a comprehensive report) should not lead to an assumption that it will carry less risk. The establishment of a Ukraine Crisis Coordination Team (UCCT) in January 2022 indicated that all the work done in and on Ukraine would need a special group to provide overview and coordination. Moving forward, such groups ought to have risk analysis and oversight as key tasks. They must ensure that such risk analysis includes the perspectives of all internal key stakeholders, and that it can present a balanced and joined-up view of the risk facing the organization. It must also ensure that such risk analysis is used to guide decision making.

6. Culture

Amnesty is not the only organization that originated in a European context and has since extended its presence and reach globally. It is also not the only organization that struggles to become truly global and inclusive. The way that resources, influence and power flow in organizations like Amnesty shapes both formal and informal authority and is difficult to change. Amnesty has taken steps towards true inclusion (see for example the adoption of the guiding principles for feminist leadership adopted in 2022) but both systems and behaviours are slower to change. Principles reflect ambitions but not resolve. They are a good place to start but not the right place to end.

Amnesty is being described by some as 'colonial'. It signals a serious flaw that is not aligned to the values of Amnesty and the self-perception of people in Amnesty. Most people in Amnesty would see themselves as actively anti-colonial and anti-racist by default of their beliefs and values. This, however, is not a guarantee that it is reflected in behaviour and processes. The use of the word 'colonial' can

also have the opposite effect than the one intended: rather than heighten attention and concern, it can block listening.

It is relevant here to quote Amnesty's own commitment and how to live up to that: *To make the most of our diversity, we listen actively to each other's experiences, encourage others to do the same, and we change our perspectives accordingly. […] We respect diversity and inclusion also by embedding their principles into our processes. We use intersectional analysis to help address the way racism, class oppression, patriarchy, and other systems of discrimination might create inequal relations within and across the movement, including day to day working life*. This is taken from the guidelines for feminist leadership which were adopted in 2022, at the same time as the events leading to the publication of the press release were unfolding. It seems that there is no need to introduce a new policy. The question is what each team is going to do differently on a daily basis to live up to these principles. This could start with the CLT, not because it is more important than other parts of Amnesty but because they can powerfully model behaviours that reflect a changed working culture.

Given that these issues have been raised before, and that many people express a frustration that things do not change, Amnesty should reflect on what was not done in previous attempts to address the situation, or why those efforts did not bring about the desired change. A change in organizational culture is not a project. It is a constant responsibility of everyone, but most specifically a responsibility of managers at all levels and in all locations to ensure that their immediate teams and colleagues are able to practice the changed behaviour needed. Shaping such culture should be part of a long-term strategy and commitment. The move in this direction should not be forgotten after a few weeks or months of work. It should lead towards a strong embeddedness of such values in the work of the organization and its staff.

Further, Amnesty should explore how collaborative criticism and troubleshooting can be 'rewarded' and incentivized and not seen as obstacles or blockages. This could be as part of the QAF, in the context of cross-functional teams, or in collaborative platforms.

7. Staff wellbeing

The review has shown that care for staff wellbeing and safety was a concern for different functions in Amnesty, and that attention to this translated into actions and acts of solidarity. The situation exposed a number of individuals to intense public criticism, threats and hostilities. Some of those exposed the most do not seem to have raised the need for support, but all staff and board members who may be exposed and carry a significant responsibility have the right to support and care and should be able to access such support and care with ease and without stigma. In the future, Amnesty must ensure that all staff are proactively supported in a way that suits them when they face pressure and tension. Internal processes for staff wellbeing must not be victim to the effects of internal tensions in Amnesty. Amnesty has invested in making available a broad suite of mental health and wellbeing support services – from trauma counselling to internal support groups, and from workshops to enhance psychosocial intelligence to a 24-hour employee assistance program. Making sure that staff are given the time and space to utilize these services is critical.

8. Fundraising

Following the crisis, some sections needed support from the IS in the context of fundraising activities. For a few sections, the drop in income was significant and in order to keep the proper operation and

continuation of activities, direct support was needed. The Solidarity in Crisis Fund successfully provided support to all sections that were significantly affected.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

These preliminary recommendations consolidate and build on the learnings from the reviews. They were identified by the International Board and the Coalition Leadership Team.

1. **Incorporate Amnesty principles into the way we work on emergency and crisis situations**

Oversight and coordination: ensuring meaningful involvement and mutual respect

- Ensure that key stakeholders across the organization are identified and represented, particularly those from directly affected entities, and that conditions are created that ensure meaningful involvement and consultation.
- Establish a single IS crisis coordination and management team, responsible for driving strategy and overseeing the organization's substantive response. The main team may create smaller and more focused groups to address specific issues, such as security or communications, which report back to the main coordination team.
- Ensure that the staff of offices most directly affected are able to see planned output early in the process to provide their advice. This should not affect the evidence, analysis and claims brought forth in the output, but could influence framing, timing and pre-publication preparation.
- Establish a clear and accessible mechanism for relevant staff to raise urgent concerns about an output and risks associated with it.
- Clarify the principle of One Amnesty (subsidiarity) and provide guidance on its application in terms of behaviour, mechanisms and processes.
- Establish a Crisis Response Sounding Board with representatives from most affected national entities: they should be involved and consulted on risks and mitigation analysis; the framing, timing and communications strategy for outputs or actions (unless this creates an unacceptable security risk).
- Implement an escalation policy that provides a genuine opportunity to be heard for those outside the central hierarchy of the organization. This may include confidential or parallel reporting, and should not simply reproduce the line-management chain.

Impartiality, accuracy and independence

- Ensure that decisions on actions and outputs are driven by an overarching strategy and theory of change, continually adjusted to evolving realities on the ground.
- Ensure that our outputs reflect—in language and content—our commitment to impartiality, making clear that we do not support any government, ideology or political system, or take sides in political or territorial conflicts (other than to uphold the rights of the victims).
- Revise and implement standards on the threshold of information, evidence, and factual analysis required to draw conclusions about human rights violations, particularly around how to establish 'a pattern' of violations, and how to use representative samples credibly
- Seek all appropriate expertise and advice to ensure our outputs are as effective as possible.
- Require periodic refresher training for all research managers and other research staff, as an integral part of their personal objectives and assessments.

2. **Quality Assurance Framework**

- Ensure that there is always an agreed theory of change for research and action, which identifies the most appropriate and impactful output for publication or dissemination.
- Clarify chain of review for sign-off and approvals and require that this be agreed in advance and communicated to all key stakeholders.
- Be clear, specific and systematic about the role of national entities in sign off and quality assurance.
- For major or sensitive outputs, establish a mechanism for formally flagging a serious concern on any issues regulated by the QAF, including a log visible to approvers that indicates these concerns and how they were addressed or why they were not.
- Review the importance of sequencing of different stages (first review, legal review, final review) to ensure that all aspects and sign offs of a previous phase are completed.
- Identify how to address check done at previous stage in case changes are brought at a later stage

3. Dissent and Disagreement

- Establish a procedure for escalation of disagreement over actions or outputs outside of the review hierarchy, which includes a confidential mechanism for escalation.
- Establish a mechanism for recording any concerns or disagreements, including a log visible to subsequent approvers and those raising the concerns that describes these concerns and how they were addressed. Substantial disagreement should be summarized and summaries made accessible to all those concerned, forcing actual listening and hearing.
- Consider using outside (legal) experts to provide an additional review to particular content, and to discuss legal and policy interpretations.

4. Risk analysis and management

- Ensure that a holistic risk analysis is agreed and managed by the central oversight team and includes an assessment of risks around the safety of individual staff as well as wider reputational and security risks to the organization, spelling out mitigations and precautions.
- Include the perspectives of all key stakeholders, including the National Entities Crisis Response Sounding Board, in order to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of the risks facing the organization.
- Invite national entities to contribute their contextual understanding in mapping out the range of likely risks.
- Provide a clear and accessible mechanism for raising any urgent concerns about an action or output and the risks associated with it.

5. Legal and policy analysis

- Review requirements for pre-output planning to determine what kind of internal legal memorandum will be created that sets out the legal sources, analysis and interpretation used to underpin an output, even where this memo is not included in the output itself.
- Review Amnesty's standards and process for ensuring rigour in legal review of research outputs, and for ensuring that legal analysis is adequately reflected in the output, even where this may increase output length beyond the usual limit.
- Clarify those elements of humanitarian and human rights law where Amnesty may be said to have a progressive interpretation relative to other expert bodies, jurists, and other human

rights NGOS. Consider producing for public circulation a report highlighting all these progressive interpretations for reference in documents.

- Develop internal memoranda setting out Amnesty's legal thinking on specific human rights or humanitarian law situations where legal questions may be complex, or where the matters involved may be judged significantly differently by other legal experts.

6. Right of Reply

- Revise the existing guidance on right of reply to cover a broader range of situations and outputs.
- Clarify the circumstances in which a right of reply is required and provide additional guidance on acceptable reply periods, including for crisis outputs.
- Ensure that right of reply is discussed and a decision is agreed as part of the planning process for each output, and is incorporated into the strategy or theory of change.

7. Press releases and other formats

- In all planning for output release, consider what is the best format and tone to reflect the nuances and caveats of the evidence and legal analysis underpinning Amnesty's message, even where this nuanced language might result in less media traction/visibility.
- Avoid using standalone extended press releases for human rights reporting or analysis, unless they are backed by a more substantive briefing or report.
- All those involved in the quality assurance review process must ensure the use of precise and, if required, technical or legal language. Avoid overly categorical and inflammatory language and tone.
- Review range of Amnesty's press formats and associated word limits to allow for more flexibility.

8. Communications strategy

- Tailor communications strategies, including social media strategies, for the different contexts in which Amnesty entities operate, taking into account the different time zones
- In all planning for output release, include systematic analysis of the predicted reaction of the public and key stakeholders.
- Fully prepare Amnesty leaders, particularly in national entities, to answer pertinent and difficult questions related to complex and controversial outputs.
- Ensure the overarching strategy for a given context identifies the key parameters any communication activities should follow, including with regard to language, headlines, tone and format among others.
- Consider security concerns along with communication strategies where there may be an impact on the security of staff or members.

Social Media

- Revise and disseminate social media guidance for the use of Twitter, Facebook, TikTok and other social media platforms.
- In sensitive situations, ensure that key Amnesty leaders not post on Twitter, Facebook or other social media without the advice of MarComms and/or Lawpol. Develop a mechanism to ensure rapid response review while retaining the special character of social media communication.

9. Culture and relationships

- Establish mechanism to collect regularly (monthly) instances of substantive disagreements (between sections and the IS, between sections) detailing how these were addressed and solved – with the view of identifying and collecting best practices for active and respectful listening, mediation, negotiations, consensus building; Share instances and analysis on a quarterly basis with the IS and the Movement.
- Ensure implementation of anti-racist operational plan and feminist leadership principles; identify specific actions within teams and programs to promote these principles; monitor and report on a six-monthly basis.
- Ensure that managers at all levels and in all locations support and join their teams and colleagues in identifying and practicing changed behaviours.
- Ensure that senior leadership across the movement understands and models behaviours that reflect a changed working culture.
- Explore how collaborative criticism and troubleshooting can be 'rewarded' and incentivized.
- Create alternative internal channels for resolving dissent, which may include escalation to relevant external experts.
- As part of the escalation process, ensure that any substantial disagreement be summarized and reviewed by those who disagree, so that both parties recognize the content of both sides of the disagreement, and ensure that their own concerns are heard and understood
- Establish a new team at the level of DSG focusing on learning and cultural change, to operationalize lessons learnt and lead the organizational change requirements that emerge from reviews/evaluations, governance decisions and/or decisions by the Coalition Leadership Team.

10. Staff wellbeing

- Ensure that all staff are proactively supported in a way that suits them when they face exceptional pressures and tensions in their work.
- Give staff the time and space to utilize the broad suite of mental health and wellbeing support services available.

Concluding remarks

These reviews are among several that have been conducted in recent years to consider how events unfolded in relation to a decision or an output that caused negative backlash and profound questioning internally. These reviews were reflected in written submissions and by the people interviewed. Amnesty stakeholders shared frustration that the previous reviews and recommendations had not

yielded real change in Amnesty's culture and practice and expressed the fervent hope that this review would not face a similar fate.

There is a feeling that the aftermath of the August 4 press release underscored both the imperative for and the urgency of deep self-reflection, concrete action, meaningful accountability and genuine change. The impact of Amnesty's future work rests on its willingness and capacity to make the changes required to live up to its values, mission and principles, especially in volatile and uncertain times. The consolidated recommendations are offered with humility and respect, knowing that they must be refined and adapted to Amnesty's context in more granular ways – and must be considered in the context of recommendations made by other such reviews of the recent past.

There is a theme emerging from these reviews: things need to be done differently moving forward. It is in this spirit that learnings have been identified and operational recommendations have been outlined, both as an encouragement of initiatives embarked on and as a reminder to not stop short of implementation. It will be up to Amnesty at the IS, IB and as a movement, to devise and implement a solid action plan. Only Amnesty can change Amnesty for the better.

ANNEX 1

AMNESTY OUTPUTS ON UKRAINE, RUSSIA, AND BELARUS

ISSUED SINCE FEBRUARY 2022

Ukraine

2022

- 27 February, press release Ukraine: Cluster munitions kill child and two other civilians taking shelter at a preschool
- March 1, campaign How to respond to large refugee arrivals: The 5 "golden rules" for European countries as people flee Ukraine
- March 1, action, Stop the aggression and protect civilians in Ukraine
- March 2, statement by AI Ukraine Director, HRC 49: Urgent debate: The Human Rights Council must act decisively and create a mechanism on Ukraine
- March 3, press release, EU: Temporary protection is needed for everyone fleeing Ukraine
- March 8, quote, Interview with Amnesty Denmark on how EL is investigating indiscriminate attacks in Ukraine
- March 9, press release, Ukraine: Russian 'dumb bomb' air strike killed civilians in Chernihiv – new investigation and testimony
- March 10, press release, Ukraine: Humanitarian corridors for civilians fleeing Russian attacks must provide safety – new testimonies
- March 16, press release, Ukraine: Beleaguered town of Izium at breaking point after constant attack from Russian forces - new testimony
- March 16, public statement, Ukraine: International protection for people fleeing Ukraine
- March 17, public statement, Europe: Call to Action. The sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls and marginalized populations affected by the conflict in Ukraine
- March 18, press release, A guide to how Amnesty verifies military attacks in Ukraine
- March 22, press release Poland: Authorities must act to protect people fleeing Ukraine from further suffering
- March 22, briefing, Ukraine: Humanitarian Catastrophe in Izium. The Plight of Civilians under Bombardment and Siege-like Conditions
- March 23, open letter to European Commission and Council, Urgent call on the European Commission and the Council to refrain from approving recovery funds to the governments of Poland and Hungary and provide direct support to local authorities, civil society and human rights defenders providing for refugees of the war
- March 24, public statement, UKRAINE AND RUSSIA: Amnesty International's Key Recommendations for EU leaders

- April 1, press release, Ukraine: Russia's cruel siege warfare tactics unlawfully killing civilians – new testimony and investigation
- April 4, press release, Ukraine: Apparent war crimes by Russian forces in Bucha must be investigated
- April 7, press release, Ukraine: Russian forces extrajudicially executing civilians in apparent war crimes – new testimony
- April 11, public statement, Poland: Cruelty Not Compassion, at Europe's Other Borders
- April 11, press release, Poland/Belarus: New evidence of abuses highlights 'hypocrisy' of unequal treatment of asylum-seekers
- April 12, briefing, Ukraine: Principles for responsibility-sharing and sustainable assistance to people fleeing Ukraine
- April 15, explainer video, Video interview with vox.com - resulted in a 9 min video explainer on cluster munitions by vox.com using our work on Kharkiv and the 3D model we built in March
- May 6, press release, Russian forces must face justice for war crimes in Kyiv Oblast
- May 6, briefing, Ukraine: "He's not coming back". War crimes in Northwest areas of Kyiv Oblast
- May 12, oral statement, The Human Rights Council Should Support a Comprehensive and Ambitious Approach to Long-term Accountability in Ukraine
- May 17, press release, Ukraine/Russia: The rights of Ukrainian prisoners of war from Azovstal must be respected
- May 20, public statement, Ukraine: High Level Secretary General Mission to Ukraine: End of mission statement
- May 22, explainer video, Video interview on Danish national TV explaining how the Evidence Lab conducts digital investigations
- June 9, press release, Ukraine/Russia: "Death sentences" against three foreign members of Ukrainian forces by separatists' "courts" a blatant violation of international law
- June 13, press release, Ukraine: Hundreds killed in relentless Russian shelling of Kharkiv – new investigation
- June 13, briefing, Ukraine: "Anyone can die at any time": Indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces in Kharkiv, Ukraine
- June 13, video, 3D reconstruction of Akademika Pavlova + video situating testimonies in the 3D model for "Anyone can die at any time"
- June 13, story page, Anyone can die at any time: Indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces in Kharkiv, Ukraine
- June 20, press release, Ukraine: "Historic victory for women's rights" as Istanbul Convention ratified
- June 23, feature video, Crimes de guerre, avec les enquêteurs en Ukraine
- June 30, press release, Deadly Mariupol theatre strike 'a clear war crime'
- June 30, report, Ukraine: "Children": The attack on the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theatre in Mariupol, Ukraine
- June 30, explainer video, Detailed Investigation Into Russian Air Strikes on the Mariupol Theatre

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- March 10, press release, Ukraine: Prisoners of war 'sentenced' to prison following sham trials in Russian-occupied territories
- April 28, press release, Ukraine: Truth, justice and reparations for victims of Russian aggression in Ukraine ever more paramount following latest attacks

Russian Federation

2022

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- 24 February, press release Soaring concern for human rights and human lives as Russia invades Ukraine
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- September 23, press release, Russia/Ukraine: So-called referenda in the occupied territories are in blatant breach of international law
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- February 15, press release, Russia: Journalist Maria Ponomarenko sentenced to six years in penal colony over Ukraine bombing post
- February 17, press release, Russia: Disclose whereabouts of imprisoned activist Andrei Pivovarov disappeared one month ago
- February 27, joint public statement, Russia: Man "disappeared", apparently for his sexual orientation. Chechen Authorities Should Immediately Free Idris Arsamikov
- March 7, press release, Russia: Student blogger sentenced to long imprisonment in brutal repression of anti-war dissent
- March 17, press release, Russia: ICC's arrest warrant against Putin a step towards justice for victims of war crimes in Ukraine
- March 21, press release, Russia: Authorities step up activist 'witch-hunt' by searching homes of Memorial members

- April 17, press release, Russia: Anti-war political activist and prisoner of conscience Vladimir Kara-Murza sentenced to 25 years in jail
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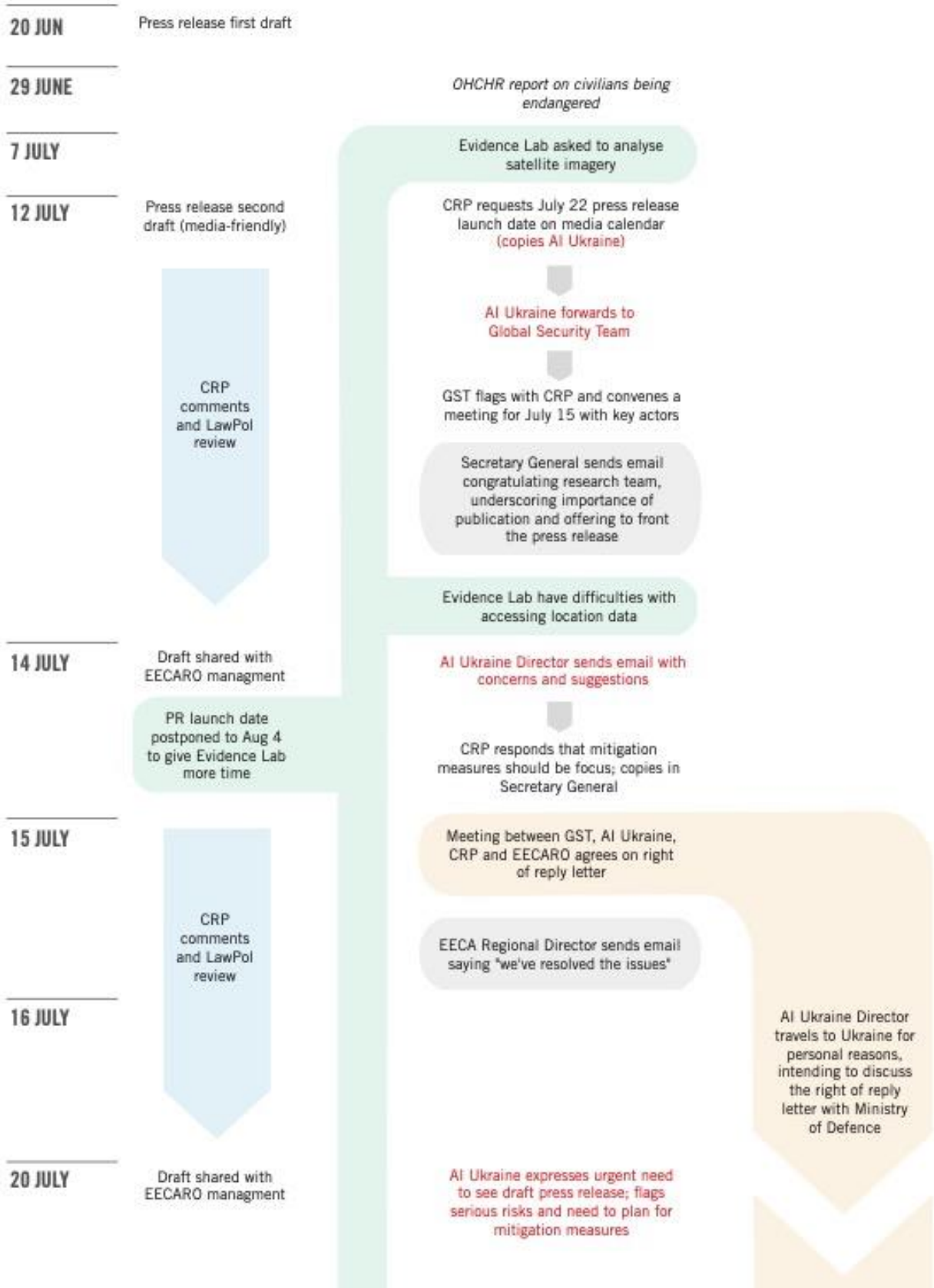
Belarus

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- May 19, press release, Belarus: New death penalty law is the ultimate attack on human rights
- June 6, press release, Belarus: Sham trial against BelaPAN news agency highlights stifling of independent media
- July 6, press release, Belarus: Free student jailed for 6.5 years for reposting criticism of Ukraine war and Lukashenka
- July 13, press release, Belarus: Immediately release journalist sentenced to eight years on bogus "state treason" charges
- July 29, press release, Belarus: Sham "conspiracy to seize power" trial against prominent political activists starts
- September 6, press release, Belarus: Harsh sentences for Rabkova and co-defendants illustrate crushing of civil society
- October 7, press release, Human rights defenders from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine win the Nobel Peace Prize
- November 30, press release, Belarus: Whereabouts of prisoner of conscience Mariya Kalesnikava must be disclosed amid reports of hospitalization

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- January 5, press release, Belarus: Trial against Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski a 'shameful pretense' of justice
- March 3, press release, Belarus: Sentencing of human rights defenders a 'blatant retaliation' for their work

ANNEX 2: UKRAINE PRESS RELEASE PREPARATION
Overview of Timeline

20 JUN — Press release first draft

29 JUNE — *OHCHR report on civilians being endangered*

7 JULY — Evidence Lab asked to analyse satellite imagery

12 JULY — Press release second draft (media-friendly)

CRP requests July 22 press release launch date on media calendar (copies AI Ukraine)

AI Ukraine forwards to Global Security Team

GST flags with CRP and convenes a meeting for July 15 with key actors

Secretary General sends email congratulating research team, underscoring importance of publication and offering to front the press release

Evidence Lab have difficulties with accessing location data

CRP comments and LawPol review

14 JULY — Draft shared with EECARO managment

AI Ukraine Director sends email with concerns and suggestions

CRP responds that mitigation measures should be focus; copies in Secretary General

PR launch date postponed to Aug 4 to give Evidence Lab more time

15 JULY — Meeting between GST, AI Ukraine, CRP and EECARO agrees on right of reply letter

EECA Regional Director sends email saying "we've resolved the issues"

CRP comments and LawPol review

16 JULY — AI Ukraine Director travels to Ukraine for personal reasons, intending to discuss the right of reply letter with Ministry of Defence

20 JULY — Draft shared with EECARO managment

AI Ukraine expresses urgent need to see draft press release; flags serious risks and need to plan for mitigation measures

21 JULY

Human Rights Watch output: Russian and Ukrainian bases endangering civilians

22 JULY

Draft shared with Secretary General and AI Ukraine

First time AI Ukraine see the press release

26 JULY

Secretary General comments on draft press release

Evidence Lab conveys results of satellite imagery analyst to CRP

27 JULY

Right of reply letter is emailed to Ministry of Defence

28 JULY

Decision to keep sentence regarding satellite imagery in the press release

1 AUGUST

Ukrainian translator raises risk of irrevocably damaging AI Ukraine's reputation and feeding into Russian propaganda

Q&A developed (first draft by News & Media; revised by CRP; reviewed by LawPol)

Europe Translation Coordinator passes on message to CRP and EECARO

2 AUGUST

Press release shared with Sections under embargo (time agreed with AI Ukraine)

Ministry of Defence conveys that response prior to Aug 3 is not possible due to work relating to Olenivka attack

3 AUGUST

Q&A shared with Sections

AI Ukraine informs CRP that the Ministry of Defence will not respond on Aug 3 and to go ahead with the press release

4 AUGUST

Press release is published

ANNEX 3: IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF UKRAINE PRESS RELEASE PUBLICATION

Overview of Timeline

4 AUGUST

Press release is posted to AI website at 00.01 BST

Press release reportedly picked up on Russian Telegram channels and then on Ukrainian Telegram channels

AI Ukraine staff begin to receive extreme negative reactions

Press release is posted to AI Twitter account at 9.06 BST

Ukrainian public relations agency cut off ties with AI Ukraine

Urgent meeting to discuss backlash from press release. Participants include AI Ukraine, EECARO, CRP, GST and MarComms. AI Ukraine staff describe extent of backlash, loss of partners and threats received, and advocate strongly for issuing a statement distancing themselves from the press release. GST advises that such a statement would not necessarily improve security posture.

Secretary General tweets: "Ukrainian and Russian social media mobs and trolls: they are all at it today attacking @amnesty investigations. This is called war propaganda, disinformation, misinformation. This won't dent our impartiality and won't change the facts."

AI Ukraine Director posts a statement by the AI Ukraine team on Facebook asserting that the press release was produced by foreign researchers in the Crisis Team and AI Ukraine staff were not involved and tried to stop it.

5 AUGUST

First set of lines of response (LORs) sent to Sections

Lively discussion among Section Directors and Secretary General, with some sections receiving intense backlash and needing urgent communications guidance/support.

Meeting with Section Directors.

AI Ukraine Director posts a statement on Facebook announcing her resignation.

6 AUGUST

Emergency meeting of International Board, Coalition Leadership Team (SLT) and relevant IS staff.

International Board meets separately to discuss the situation.

Discussion about the need to bring on a public relations firm to advise on crisis communications.

7 AUGUST

Amnesty posts an "apology statement" on its website. The first sentence reads: "Amnesty International deeply regrets the distress and anger that our press release on the Ukrainian military's fighting tactics has caused."

Senior Crisis Advisor tweets that she was the principal researcher and author of two Amnesty reports on Russia's war crimes in Ukraine, and that the August 4 PR was effort of three researchers (including her) and several other colleagues.

8 AUGUST

MarComms Director forms a Media Crisis Response Group assigning distinct roles and responsibilities to members. The group met twice daily to review requests and draft new lines of responses in reaction to developing news stories as needed.

9 AUGUST

Global Board Chairs call.

10 AUGUST

Secretary General and International Board Chair write to the Amnesty movement to announce an in-depth independent review of the process leading up to the press release and the backlash against it, and a separate legal review panel to review legal arguments and methodology used.

13 AUGUST

Former AI Ukraine Director publishes op-ed in the Washington Post entitled "What Amnesty got wrong in Ukraine and why I had to resign."