



## INTRODUCTION TO AIUSA GROUP X (SAMPLE ONLY!) CREATE YOUR OWN FOR YOUR GROUP)

Welcome to Amnesty International USA Group X. We are very happy to have you as a part of our group. We meet monthly at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month at All Saints Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley Street (at Hamilton), Palo Alto.

In this packet, you will find

1. An introduction to Group X (this sheet)
2. A member interest questionnaire (Please return it to the New Member or Group Coordinator)
3. Facts and figures about Amnesty International
4. Letter-writing suggestions and the address and phone numbers of our Washington representatives
5. A glossary of Amnesty terms and acronyms
6. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For further information about AI or Group X, please feel free to call any of the people listed below .

Name	Group Roles	Email	Home Phone
Foo Bar	Group Coordinator/S. Andean	FooBar@great.com	999-999-9999
Great One	China Action File Coordinator	GreatOne@foo.com	000-000-0000
...			

### Group X's Work

Group X's work is organized around four goals:

1. To carry out AI's mission, seeking the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners, abolition of torture and death penalty, and an end to extrajudicial executions and "disappearances";
2. To reach out to our community to raise the level of awareness on human rights and to attract new members;
3. To help other AI groups to become more effective in human-rights work;
4. To raise money to fund our activities.

### Mission Work

The mission of Amnesty International that defines the scope of AI's work as:

To promote awareness of and adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized human rights instruments, the values enshrined in them, and the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and freedoms;

To oppose grave violations of the rights of every person freely to hold and to express his or her convictions and to be free from discrimination and of the right of every person to physical and mental integrity, and, in particular, to oppose by all appropriate means irrespective of political considerations:

- a) the imprisonment, detention or other physical restrictions imposed on any person by reason of his or her political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of his or her ethnic origin, sex, color, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth or other status, provided that he or she has not used or advocated violence (hereinafter referred to as 'prisoners of conscience') Amnesty International shall work towards the release of and shall provide assistance to prisoners of conscience);
- b) the detention of any political prisoner without fair trial within a reasonable time or any trial procedures relating to such prisoners that do not conform to internationally recognized norms;

c) the death penalty, and the torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons, whether or not the persons affected have used or advocated violence;

d) the extrajudicial execution of persons whether or not imprisoned, detained or restricted, and "disappearances", whether or not the persons affected have used or advocated violence.

Amnesty's method of human-rights work combines central direction and grass-root initiatives. The group coordinator receives a monthly mailing from AIUSA's central office in New York. The mailing describes the plans and opportunities for current and future work. In group meetings, we select the cases and campaigns for group actions.

Case coordinators generally work with AIUSA's country co-ordination groups who specialize in the geographic areas where the cases are located. Group members participate by developing strategies, conducting research, and carrying out actions. In the past, Group X has been extremely successful in seeing its adopted prisoners released.

Group X generally will take on a project if at least one member feels strongly about the project and is willing to champion the project. Thus, if there is an area or an issue that particularly interests you, let us know, and we may be able to find a case that you can work on. Experience is not necessary; persistence, imagination, and willingness to learn will make you an effective activist.

### **Community Outreach**

We publicize Amnesty's work in our community. We staffed tables at Bookstore every month and at local summer fairs. You can help. If you know someone in the local newspaper, radio station, or TV station interested in human rights, introduce us to him or her. If you know some public place where we can display Amnesty literature (e.g., libraries), tell us, or even better, volunteer to make sure that corner of your world is well stocked with Amnesty brochures. If you belong to an organization (such as a church) that may be interested in AI's work, contact us and we'll put you in touch with the part of AI that works with such an organization. When you see a news item that relates to Amnesty' work, call us or send us the news clipping so that we can follow up on it.

### **Assisting Other Groups**

Assistance can take many forms. Group 19 published the *Casework Manual* in 1994, which is a comprehensive resource on how to do casework. The book has been distributed to all community groups in the U.S.A and to the Amnesty organizations in 47 other countries. Members of Group 19 also started the [www.amnesty-volunteer.org](http://www.amnesty-volunteer.org) project to create an on-line archive of Amnesty resources. Group 133 in Somerville, MA, organizes "Get On The Bus" each year, bringing 100s of members to New York City for an annual day of human rights education and activism. *Somebody*, the local area coordinator, assists local student groups and edits the Bay Area Amnesty newsletter.

### **Fund Raising**

Doing human-right work is not cheap. Our expenses include the cost of producing and mailing the monthly newsletter, annual pledge to AIUSA, seed money for fund-raising projects. If you have ideas that may produce revenue (and perhaps raise the visibility of Amnesty at the same time), bring them to the meetings. You can also help by selling T-shirts and tickets to benefit events, organizing rummage or garage sales, and tabling at fairs and public places.

### **New Members**

Group X is blessed with many talented and dedicated members. Still, we need fresh ideas and new perspectives to become even more effective. If you have not yet volunteered yourself, come to one of our meetings. Join us in a cause that we all believe in.