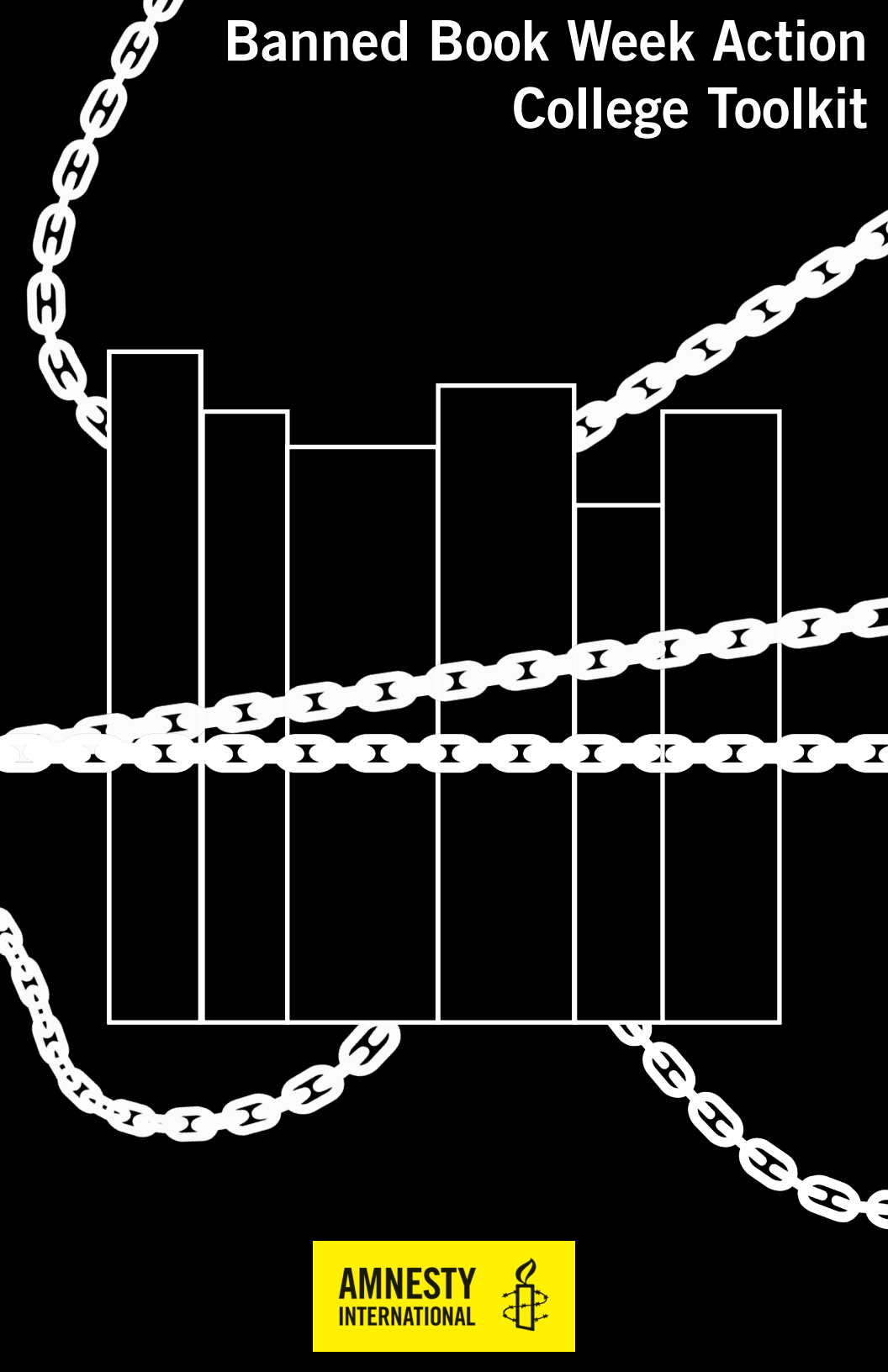


Banned Book Week Action College Toolkit



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



History of Banned Book Week

OVER VIEW

Banned Books Week was founded in 1982 by prominent First Amendment and library activist Judith Krug. Krug said that the Association of American Publishers contacted her with ideas to bring banned books to the attention of the American public after a slew of books had been banned that year. Krug relayed the information to the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee and six weeks later we celebrated the first Banned Books Week.

Every September since 1990, Amnesty International has worked with partners during Banned Books Week to draw attention to writers, editors, librarians, publishers, poets, musicians, and readers who suffer human rights violations because of their work. Because of the proverbial "power of the word", many journalists and artists are under attack around the world – by governments and opposition groups.

As a member of the Banned Books Week Coalition and in solidarity with the American Library Association (ALA) and organizations around the world, Amnesty organizes and mobilizes action to defend and protect freedom of expression.

18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Censorship Violates

Book bans and censorship of art violate three key articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Articles 18, 19, and 20 are repeated here to show how censorship violates our rights.

19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

20

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Why bring Banned Book Week to campus?

1

**Your
Voice
Matters.**

To put it simply, college students are not as powerless or removed as one might think. College students rest in a unique position that allows ample opportunity to become involved with banned books and censorship campaigns.

2

**Your
Thoughts
Matters.**

Our position as older youth combined with increased social independence allots freedom from school boards and overzealous parents in education. As university students, we possess significant social and political capital.

Our universities have an insintive to listen to us: our dollars buy us a stake in the formation of university policy.

3

**Your
Vote
Matters.**

College & University students can also vote in local, state, and federal elections, providing an additional leverage point among elected officials that younger age groups do not have.

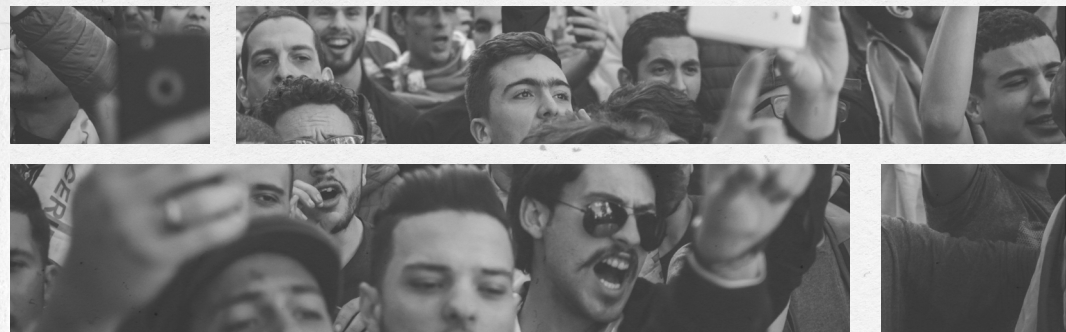


SPREaDING W T H E W O R D



So, you're Planning Banned Book Week Action and want to spread the word? There are three main steps to spreading the word about Banned Book Week Actions, including Campus Action, Local/State Action, and National Action. Each step contains unique advantages and challenges to implementation; however, they are all necessary to increase the likelihood of a successful Banned Book Week campaign!

NOTE: Please reach out to Amnesty's Press team at: media@aiusa.org before reaching out to any national news organizations.



Step One: Campus News Outlets

Questions to Consider

- ✱ What level of knowledge do students at your institution already have about banned book week? What would you like them to know?
- ✱ What is your intended call-to-action- ex. Increased awareness of banned book week cases, signing of petitions, increased student participation in the campus Amnesty chapter.
- ✱ Is this a one-time action that you are taking, or do you plan to continue working with campus media? If it's an ongoing action, how might that change the way you communicate the message?

Advice

- ✱ Get in contact with your campus newspaper editor or follow the newspaper on social media! The instructions for getting involved are often straightforward.
- ✱ Don't want to write the article but still want to spread awareness? Work with your local Amnesty International Chapter to host an event for Banned Book Week! Then, invite your campus newspaper to attend and cover the event in the News section.
- ✱ Work with other activist groups on campus and create social media posts to share.
- ✱ Reach out to social sciences, languages, Human Rights, and related Humanities Departments with news blasts about the Banned Book Week Cases. Most likely they will circulate the actions to other faculty and organizations.
- ✱ Collaboration is key! Find ways to partner with other departments and clubs to increase attendance at your banned book events. Do you have an English Department? Host an event with them to read banned poetry, learn about the authors, and act!
- ✱ Can you find ways to discuss Banned Books Week during class? Hand out flyers and bookmarks to your professors before class and ask them to distribute them!
- ✱ If your college or University has a daily digest, request information about how to get banned book week cases advertised in it! These emails reach thousands of students and staff and are typically free to send.

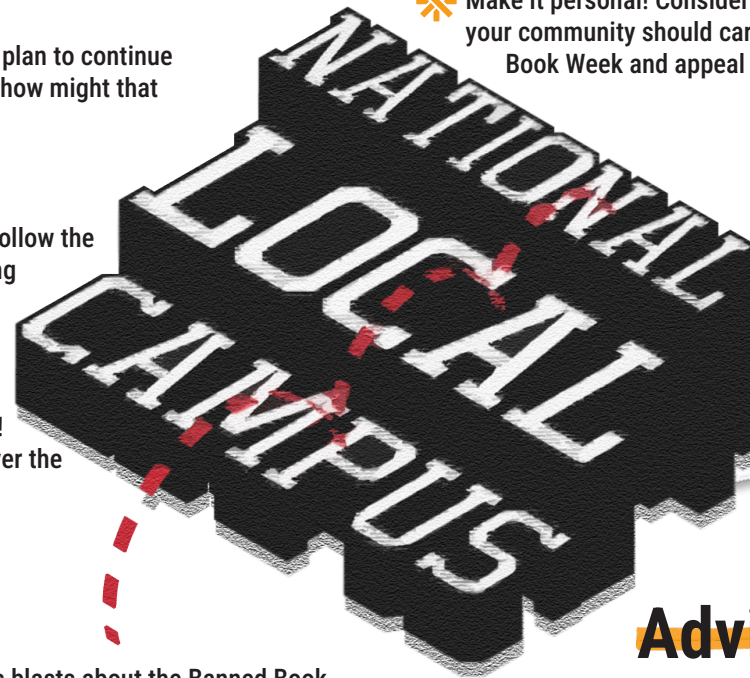
Step Two: Local News Outlets

Advice

- ✱ Collaborate with AIUSA groups across the city or state to increase likelihood of press attention! The more participants, the better!
- ✱ Make it personal! Consider why people in your community should care about Banned Book Week and appeal to that.

Questions to Consider

- ✱ What do the people in your city or State already know about this issue? What would you like them to know?
- ✱ What is your city or State's current relationship to Human Rights and Censorship? How can you connect these local issues to the international cases of Banned Book Week?
- ✱ What is the likelihood of your article or op-ed getting published? Is there anything that you can do to increase the likelihood?



Step Three: National News Outlets

Advice

- ✱ The bigger the event, the more likely national news will pick up the story. Reach out to Amnesty chapters in different states and try to plan a nation-wide action! Even if a few college campuses participate in a coordinated action, this increases the chance of national attention.
- ✱ When reaching out to national news, it might be best to focus on one issue or case rather than multiple. What case would you want to highlight?

Questions to Consider

- ✱ What is the intended goal of reaching out to the national press?
- ✱ What news outlet is most likely to be supportive of the cause and pick up the story?
- ✱ Have you reached out to campus and local papers before moving on to national outlets?

Banned Book Week Collaborations

Collaboration is an essential part of both Human Rights work and University life. Most students have a variety of commitments and rely on support from other students to keep club activities lively. Find new ways to integrate Banned Book Week into existing club involvements, deepen collaboration, and spread Human Rights ideals to multiple parts of campus life. Think creatively! You might find a chance to collaborate in the most interesting of places...

Greek Life

Greek Life Chapters + Amnesty Chapter Collaboration- many Greek letter organizations are required to participate in group service events as a part of their chapter's philanthropy missions. They are always looking for simple ways to make a difference- reach out to the community service chair and collaborate on an event!

Graphics Club

Graphics Club+ Amnesty Chapter Collaboration- Work with the graphic club to create cool graphics regarding the cases and themes! This gives eager graphic design students an interesting subject to focus on and provides Amnesty students with new advocacy skills!



Art Club

Art Club + Amnesty Chapter Collaboration - host an event together to create posters, host a graffiti event, or throw a postcard party!

Community

Community Organizations + Amnesty Chapter Collaboration- Typically, Universities have organizations tasked with providing students community service opportunities. This is an easy collaboration to get more students involved!



Poetry Club

Poetry Club + Amnesty Chapter Collaboration - host an event together to discuss censorship of poets, read banned poetry, and write advocacy letters!

Pre-Law

Pre-law Organizations + Amnesty Chapter Collaboration - many pre-law students are interested in domestic and international politics. Work with your campus pre-law society to do letter writing advocacy!

Working With School Libraries

One great organization to collaborate with on Banned Book Week is your campus' library! Most librarians and libraries want to work and engage with student groups. Libraries gain student traction, additional opportunities to interact with students, and a chance to encourage literacy. For Amnesty student groups, collaborating with the library adds a well-established and reputable voice to Banned Book Week action and provides many additional resources! It is best to reach out as early as possible to libraries to give enough time to plan Banned Book Week Action. Below are questions to ask your campus librarians and a few example collaborations!

Does our Library Plan on Participating in this years Banned Book Week?

No

Yes

If your library does not currently have plans to participate in Banned Book Week, this is the perfect opportunity to create a new tradition! Use the following questions as a guide to encourage a new collaboration!

How can we work together to bring Banned Book Week to Campus this year?

Would the Library support an effort by our student group to create a banned book display in the library?

Would the library be willing to order books from this year's Amnesty Banned Book List? Are there books that the library already owns that can go on display?

Would the library be willing to support a reading event for Banned

Great! Use the following questions as guide to find ways to encourage an Amnesty chapter and Library collaboration.

If your library is on board there are plenty of ways to use their resources for Banned Book Week activities!

How can our Amnesty Chapter collaborate and promote Banned Book Week Cases?

If there is a banned book display, can our Amnesty Chapter add to it?

If an event is planned, how can our group participate?

What is the libraries policy around allowing student groups to promote Amnesty's Banned Book Week Cases?

Activity: Plan a reading event with your campus library!

Materials needed:

Banned books, printed banned bookcase petitions, posters, two tables, public location to host the event, at LEAST three Amnesty Students, Library Staff.


This event is designed to spark public conversation and get your campus engaged in banned books. Collaborate with the library to set up a table of currently banned books. Participants can flip through the display and have conversation about which banned books they have heard of. Additionally, Amnesty students should set up a second table with this year's Banned Book week cases. The table should contain a display of the cases, their banned materials, and petitions for participants to act. If one of the cases is centered around a work of art or non-book material, find a way to display an image of it. Meanwhile, invite participants to read up to a three-minute selection of a banned book and explain why it was banned. This could be any banned book or material. Amnesty students should read snippets from the Amnesty banned book week cases and provide additional context. This event could last anywhere from 1-3 hours!

Activity: Plan a book art creation event!

Materials needed:

Old and discarded books, paper, writing materials, an area to display final products.

This event is a great and simple opportunity to collaborate with your art department and library. Ask the library if they have any old books that they are willing to give away. Then, work with the art department and create cover designs that represent themes of censorship. Be as creative and original as possible! Once completed, work with the art department and the library to find a place to display the finished products. This event could last anywhere from 1-2 hours!



ACTIVITIES

Art and Human Rights have a very connected history. Art gives a spark for Human Rights advocacy and in turn, Human Rights provides the freedom of a world with Art.

Art has many benefits when used in relation to Human Rights work:

Art is surprising- it shocks us into paying attention.

Art is often unsettling- it moves us.

Art creates a sense of Love and protection-it bonds us.

Art is inspiring- it gives us a vision of a world without need.

Art ensures democracy- it embraces and enhances different viewpoints.

Art is transformative- It reminds the person to put themselves into someone else's shoes.

Art predisposes you to like surprises and enjoy differences. This is crucial to democracy.

Art makes hard concepts accessible-Art is a language that we can all understand.

Art ensures history- serves as an archive for times of struggle.

Henri de Saint Simon places artists at the front lines of the movement for a new world; artists are the only people capable of dreaming up new worlds and utopias.



Graffiti Party

Amnesty's Banned Book Week aims to highlight authors, journalists, and creatives who have experienced censorship due to their advocating for Human Rights. Among these creatives include graffiti artists. Host a campus graffiti party, get creative, and place yourself in the shoes of those artists!

Facilitator Notes:

Please note that this activity requires materials that could potentially be expensive. Consider ways to collaborate with others to find second-hand or older materials or consult with your university's undergraduate student government and request additional funding to purchase materials.

A major perk of art-based activities is that they spark conversation! Consider ways that your Amnesty group can display graffiti projects upon completion. Share pictures of your finished designs with IAR@aiusa.org with the subject line: BBW Art.

Materials TIP: Connect with campus or local art group and share materials!

Pencils, Sharpies, Paint Markers (Alternative to Spray Paint), Spray Paint, PPE Material (Masks, Gloves), Masking Tape, Plastic Sheet to protect surface, Blank Canvases, Blank stickers, Surface to work on.

Prep 10 minutes

Set up workspaces with Pencils, Sharpies, Paint Markers, Spray Paints, and PPE Materials. **TIP: Make sure to cover the workspace in protective material to ensure easy cleanup!**

Decide whether using Blank Stickers or canvases makes the most sense for your group. Although stickers are a cheaper and more accessible option, canvases make for bigger displays and more room to paint.

Activity 60 minutes

Invite participants to read the one-page overview of graffiti history and activism.

View images of graffiti artists and their work represented in Amnesty's Banned Book Week (Ex. Pierina Nochetti in Argentina and Aleksandra Skochilenko in Russia)

What does their work represent to you?

What most surprised you about these cases?

If you were to do similar graffiti, what social issue would you call attention to?

Explain to the participants that they will be creating their own graffiti art about a Human Rights issue they are passionate about. Example issues include LGBTQ Rights, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Abortion Rights, Climate Change, Right to Education, Policing Reform, Racial Injustice, ect. For more ideas, consider looking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Begin the graffiti party! Reference the graffiti alphabet and the internet for design inspiration

Wrap-Up 15 minutes

How did you feel when creating your graffiti project? What connections did you make between yourself and Amnesty's Banned Book Week Featured Artists?

What was your creative process when designing your project? How did you go about it?

Did this activity affect the way that you viewed this year's cases? Why or why not?

Is this an action that you would do again? How else can we incorporate Art into future campaigns?

Provide resources for people to sign petitions and take further action with Banned Book Week cases.

Take pictures and clean up! Optional: display the graffiti projects on campus.



Postcard Party

Postcard Parties have become popular in activists' spaces for their quickness, effectiveness, and easy accessibility! With only a few supplies, you and your chapter can send advocacy letters to top government officials!

Materials

Blank Postcard sets , Reference lists of official's information to send letters, Markers (optional), Pens , Sample Postcard Messages, Postage Stamps, Surface to Work on (table with chairs).

Prep 10 minutes

Set out a space to work on, preferably a set of tables and chairs. On the table, place writing materials, blank postcard sets, sample postcard messages, postage stamps, and lists of officials' information.

Create a list of government official's names, mailing addresses, and titles and place it on the tables.

Create a list of sample messages for participants to write on their postcards. Reference Amnesty's Banned Book Week Case Cards for messaging regarding the cases.

Activity 60 minutes

Discuss the different cases represented in Banned Book Week

Encourage participants to write advocacy postcards to governmental officials

Place postage stamps on to the postcards and make plans to mail them!

Potential Other Activities

Plan a Banned Book-themed poetry open mic night! Book a room and write poetry about censorship while educating others about Banned Book Week Cases!

Plan Theatrical Readings or Performances of Banned Book Material!

Create interesting and engaging Social Media content for Banned Book Week!



FACILITATING CONVERSATIONS



Dialogue is an important feature of Human Rights work. Whether among friends, an activist group, or a larger campus community, creating structured dialogue around Banned Books Week is an effective way to spread awareness and spark inspiration. Here is a template to engage in dialogue work on or off campus.

Dialogue on Chen Pinlin's Documentary 'Urumqi Middle Road'

Materials

Tables, Chairs, Note-taking paper, College Toolkit for Facilitator, Internet Connection, Screen to watch Documentary.

Introduction of the film (2 minutes)

Table rules are a short list of conduct rules that each participant agrees to follow while engaging in dialogue. These rules exist to hold participants accountable to engaging in respectful conversation while providing structural framework. The table rules below are taken from the Encounter style of dialogue, however, feel free to change them in accordance with your group.

- Be honest.
- Listening is as important as talking. Listen, even if you disagree.
- Reflection is as important as both.
- Use "I statements."
- This is not a debate. This is a dialogue for open and honest engagement.
- Criticize the idea, not the person.
- Honor the time / Honor your neighbors, especially during our moments of reflection.
- Maintain confidentiality: "stories stay; lessons leave."

After reading these aloud, ask the participants to provide a thumbs up if they agree to honor the table rules. If everyone agrees, proceed.

Watch 'Urumqi Middle Road' (76 minutes)

Watch the documentary together. Encourage participants to take notes they deem necessary.

'Urumqi Middle Road' (乌鲁木齐中路) was created by Chinese Director Chen Pinlin to recount the events of the 'White Paper Protests' a series of nationwide protests to China's harsh Zero-Covid lockdown policies and rampant censorship. The documentary was uploaded to the internet on the one-year anniversary of the White Paper Protests. Pinlin was arrested on January 5th, 2024, and is being held on charges of 'picking quarrels and provoking trouble'. If convicted, he will face up to five years in prison. Chen Pinlin's case is one of the many that Amnesty International USA is highlighting during the 2024 Banned Book Week, as key concepts of censorship and freedom of expression are central to Amnesty's mission.

Table Rules (3 minutes)

Breakout Groups (10 minutes)

2 (Say aloud)

The beginning of the documentary centers around the Urumqi apartment fire, a fire turned deadly due to China's Zero-Covid policies inhibiting access to escaping the apartments or receive emergency assistance. What most surprised you about the Chinese Government and Press' response to the fire and mourning's? What connections can you make to your own government's handling of Covid-19?

Rejoin as a large group and discuss the following questions.

Surveillance and Censorship are key themes of the documentary. Do you experience censorship in your community or government?

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." How important is the right of Freedom of expression to you? How would you rate your government's protection of article 19?

Currently, Chen Pinlin is being held in the Baoshan Detention Centre in Shanghai on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" for releasing this documentary on the internet. He faces up to five years in prison, violating his article 19 right to freedom of expression. Knowing this, how does it add to your view of the documentary and its themes? What can you do in your community to advocate for his release?

1 (Do)

Separate participants into small groups, around 3-5 members for a room of 20 people. Provide one person in each group with a copy of the college toolkit dialogue guide. Discuss the following questions in the group, getting through as many or as few before the time runs out. Be mindful that everyone in the group has an equal chance to speak and keep in mind the table rules when engaging in small group discussion.

3 (Additional questions)

- Have you ever been involved in a protest, vigil, or large gathering? Tell a story about your experience. What did you take away from that experience?
- Do you resonate with the message of the white paper protests? Why or why not?
- Is there anything else that resonated with you throughout the documentary? If so, what?

Large Group (15 minutes)

Final Thoughts

Provide a few minutes for participants to write down their final thoughts and reflections surrounding the dialogue. Ask participants to also write down a few ways they would be willing to engage in Banned Book Week and support Chen Pinlin's case. Collect the responses at the end and designate a member of the e-board to reach back out to those willing to participate.

Congrats: You have completed a dialogue!

CONCLUSION

Banned Book Week is an exciting opportunity for college groups to get involved with Amnesty International work. Occurring in the beginning of the school year for most U.S. Colleges and Universities, this is a great time to get other members of campus active and engaged with the organization.

Please report any actions taken to Amnesty's Individuals at Risk Department at IAR@aiusa.org or scan the link to the QR Code. Reporting helps us to measure our impact and we share the total number of actions taken with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Order your 2024 Banned Book Week Action Bookmark with this QR Code:

Directory/ Contact List

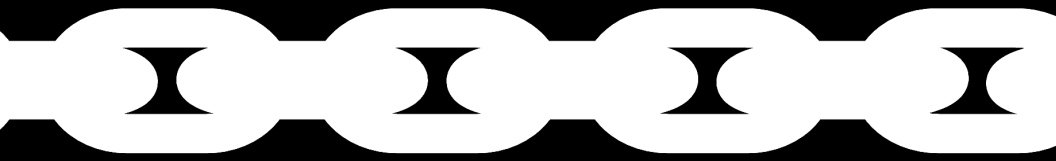
Have more questions or feedback regarding Banned Book Week or the toolkit?



Contact: IAR@aisua.org. For student group-related inquiries, contact youth@aiusa.org. Please send pictures and videos of completed Banned Book Week Actions and activities to IAR@aisua.org.

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**CHAINS ON
IDEAS**



**KEYS IN OUR
VOICES**