



THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



WHAT IS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA?

Amnesty International is a global movement of millions of people demanding human rights for all people – no matter who they are or where they are. Founded in 1961, Amnesty works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth, and dignity are denied.

Amnesty's strategy is to conduct research into human right violations and concerns, address root causes and advocate for human rights, and mobilize millions of people worldwide to take action.

Amnesty International is a non-partisan human rights organization that neither supports nor opposes any political party, candidate, government, or political ideology.



INTRODUCING THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK (UAN)

The Urgent Action Network is a global rapid response system that mobilizes activists across the world to take action in a short amount of time to bring about change for individuals and groups whose human rights are at immediate risk.

Government authorities quickly realize that the international community is deeply concerned about human rights abuses and this pressure often helps achieve positive outcomes. Our collective actions have helped stop torture, halt executions and free prisoners of conscience, or individuals who are jailed for their beliefs or identities.

This Educator's Guide was created to introduce you and your students to:

- Human Rights Education
- Actionable stories of individuals and communities at risk
- The Power of Grassroots Action

This guide was created with students in grades 6-12 and university in mind. The activities in this guide may be completed in one session but you do have the freedom to expand on them over the course of multiple sessions.

You and your students will bring human rights into the classroom, develop effective writing skills, learn from the stories of human rights defenders from all over the world, and witness their collective actions make positive changes in people's lives.

THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK WORKS...
CHECK OUT OUR VICTORIES [HERE!](#)

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

“Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.”

-The United Nations

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

[HTTPS://WWW.AMNE
STYUSA.ORG/WP-
CONTENT/UPLOADS
/2017/11/SIMPLIFI
ED-UDHR.PDF](https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/simplified-udhr.pdf)

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a historic document that outlines 30 articles defining fundamental human rights that apply to every person, everywhere.
- The UDHR was drafted and ratified on December 10, 1948 and was written as a direct response to the atrocities of WWII.
- The drafting committee of The UDHR consisted of individuals holding different political, social, cultural, geographic backgrounds such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Pen-Chun Chang, Rene Cassin, and John Humphrey. These individuals represented places like Chile, Australia, France, China, Soviet Union, The U.S., and Canada.
- The UDHR provides us with guiding principles for how all people should live. This means that Human Rights are indivisible, interconnected, and inalienable.
- The UDHR paved the way for the adoption of 70+ Human Rights treaties.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW?

The International Bill of Human Rights is comprised of:

- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**
- **The International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (ICCPR)**
- **The International Covenant on Economic, Social, & Cultural Rights (ICESCR).**

The International Bill of Human Rights outlines State obligations to:

- **PROTECT** - State must protect individuals/groups from human rights abuses
- **RESPECT** - States do not interfere with enjoyment of human rights
- **FULFILL** - States must take action to facilitate the enjoyment of human rights
- **ICCPR protects freedom from discrimination, freedom from arbitrary expulsion of non-citizens, right to marry and found a family**
- **ICESCR protects the right to strike, right to health, right to social security.**
- **The ratification of international Human Rights treaties means that governments must implement domestic measures and legislation to uphold the responsibilities outlined in treaties.**

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS TO KNOW:

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

A Prisoner of Conscience is someone who is imprisoned solely because of who they are (sexual orientation, ethnic, national or social origin, language, birth, color, gender, or economic status) or their religious, political or other beliefs, and who has not used or advocated violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

An Human Rights Defender is someone who, individually or in association with others, acts to defend or promote human rights at the local, national, regional or international levels, without resorting to or advocating hatred, discrimination or violence.

INDIVIDUALS AT RISK

Refers to an individual, a group, or a community who have been subjected to, or are at risk of, a human rights violation(s).

Lesson Plan Facilitator's Guide

The following is an abbreviated list of teaching standards that correspond with the lessons contained in this guide:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH NUMBER

- **NUMBER 4:** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- **NUMBER 11:** Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
- **NUMBER 12:** Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

- **NUMBER 5:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- **NUMBER 6:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- **NUMBER 9:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.
- **NUMBER 10:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.



Lesson Plan Facilitator's Guide

Urgent Action 101

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce human rights and the international human rights framework
- Learn the stories of individuals and communities at risk from around the world
- Support learning in geography and world affairs
- Develop writing and communication skills

With your students discuss the following:

- What are Human Rights? What is International Human Rights Law?
- What is a Human Rights Defender, Individual at Risk, Prisoner of Conscience?

Introduce the Urgent Action Network and 2 sample Urgent Actions. Discuss the following with your students:

- What is the Urgent Action Network?
- What Human Rights violations do you observe in these Urgent Action cases?
- What can be done to address these Urgent Action cases?

Break students into small groups and have them review the UAN and select 1-2 cases.

The following questions are met to guide group discussion:

- Which cases or Urgent Actions resonated with you the most and why?
- What human rights violations are being raised in the Urgent Action?
- In what ways are your human rights connected to the human rights of others around the world?

Closing Activity: Letter Writing

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

How many cases should we write on?

It's up to you. Each case involves writing a letter to two government officials who can resolve the case. Every letter helps. One option, if time is limited but you want to have your students take action on multiple UAs, is to write letters on two cases, and then print and sign the sample letter for additional Urgent Actions.

How much does it cost to participate in Urgent Actions?

All that we require from you as an educator are paper, envelopes and postage. We encourage you to send all the letters to the government officials directly, here are postage rates: within the United States, letters (up to 1 oz.) cost 73 cents each. To all other countries, airmail letters and cards (up to 1 oz.) cost \$1.65 each.

If cost is a barrier for participation, please ask for support through Amnesty's Stamp Subsidy Program. Email uan@aiusa.org for more information.

Should my students include their name and address on their letters?

It is up to you! Students can sign their full name or just their first name, and either leave off their address or include it. Please note that sometimes governments will send an acknowledgement letter on the case. Another option is listing your school's address for each student. Please note that a return address must be placed on the envelope otherwise your letter may not be processed via the USPS.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

When should we write letters?

Anytime between now and the listed action date on the UA.

How do I report how many letters we wrote?

Please report your actions here: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/report-urgent-actions/>,

Do our letters really matter?

Yes! When authorities receive thousands of letters about a particular person, they know that the world is watching them. Individuals who have experienced these human rights abuses tell us that our letters to government officials have a huge impact. Hear from them at [amnestyusa.org/news/victories/](https://www.amnestyusa.org/news/victories/).

Request a UAN Certificate for Your Classroom

We send certificates to schools that are working hard to support human rights by consistently implementing the Urgent Action Network into their curriculum or extracurricular activities.

Per Calendar Year:

300 Letters = UAN Certificate of Achievement

600 Letters = UAN Certificate of Achievement & UAN goodies for your whole class!

1000 Letters = Pizza party!

Additional Questions? Contact us at uan@aiusa.org