

Making human rights popular

International Secretariat Communications Strategy 2018–19



“

Amnesty believes that by inspiring people to take injustice personally and by mobilizing the humanity in everyone, everyone will be able to enjoy human rights.”

“

The point is that the relative freedom which we enjoy depends on public opinion. The law is no protection. Governments make laws, but whether they are carried out, and how the police behave, depends on the general temper in the country. If large numbers of people are interested in freedom of speech, there will be freedom of speech, even if the law forbids it; if public opinion is sluggish, inconvenient minorities will be persecuted, even if laws exist to protect them.”

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I Foreword

This strategy gives us exactly the kind of emphasis that we want to put on communications and is a culmination of a number of changes we have been making for the last couple of years. This gives us the confident and bold communications that we need at Amnesty in the future.

We face a number of challenges in the world today, not least the rise of dehumanizing and demonizing politicians who successfully use media and social media to traduce the basic rights of humans. This document rises to this challenge by aiming to present human rights in a more “populist” way – to make human rights more popular - and to aggressively use the tools available to get our message over to more people.

This approach is essential to helping Amnesty achieve Goal 5 and I look forward to seeing it in action.

Thomas Schultz-Jagow
Senior Director, Campaigns & Communications

This document is the product of the input and commitment of the many people who desire a refreshed approach to comms at Amnesty. My thanks go to too numerous a group of people to mention by name in the secretariat (comms and non-comms) and in various sections.

It marks a departure for us from previous ways of working. We will now be more focused on enhancing the brand and using communications levers to drive human rights change and organizational growth. We will communicate in a way that will be driven by data, will appeal to audiences, and will better serve our sections. It reaches digital and traditional audiences in a joined-up way.

Who is this strategy for? It’s a strategy for the secretariat, but has been designed to have applicability across our movement. We welcome others lifting parts of it and adapting it for their own use.

Osama Bhutta
Director, Communications

| Who we are

We operate on a model of part news agency, part advertising agency. This means we are relevant to events, issues and conversations taking place around the world day-to-day. We also use the best of data, neuroscience and creativity to produce big comms campaigns that inspire people to believe that their world can be better and that they should take action to achieve this.

We produce compelling content for Amnesty's sections and national offices, who localise the materials and get the message out. We additionally directly distribute content in International Member countries that do not yet have an Amnesty presence. We tell the Amnesty brand story and enhance our brand recognition. We defend the organization, and the human rights project itself, from attack.

We act as a hub for the movement's comms workers, setting joint priorities, sharing best practice, and bringing together talents to work together across our structures.

We do all of this because human rights benefit us all individually and collectively. We want more people to enjoy human rights and our job is therefore to build support for them and to mobilize people to achieve them.

Amnesty's IS global comms team consists of News & Media, Video, Design, Creative Management, Digital Engagement, Publishing and Brand. They set standards for comms outputs, ensure they are upheld consistently across the secretariat, and schedule our work for impact. Regional media managers and content managers are part of a matrix global team. Regional offices are responsible for producing content in their regions, with the global team adding firepower for big global stories where audience/section demand requires it.

| Our approach

CREATIVE

IT'S A NOISY WORLD AND WE HAVE TO BE BOLD, VIBRANT
AND ATTITUDINAL TO STAND OUT AND BE HEARD

PERSISTENT

PEOPLE HAVE TO HEAR A MESSAGE SEVERAL TIMES
BEFORE IT HAS IMPACT

POSITIVE

IT'S BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN TO CURSE THE
DARKNESS, SO OUR OUTPUTS HAVE TO REFLECT HOPE
AND ACTION

COLLABORATIVE

WE ARE ONE MOVEMENT AND WE WANT TO MAKE THE BEST
OF OUR TALENTS ACROSS SECTIONS AND SECRETARIAT



I Goals and objectives

Goal: Make the case for human rights

Human rights are under attack, even in countries considered to be their traditional heartlands. This means we cannot make assumptions about the inherent strength of our case. We need to be able to show WHY human rights matter and HOW people benefit through them. The opponents of human rights are increasingly sophisticated in their messaging and targeting. Amnesty comms must rise to the challenge. Human rights must appear exciting if we are to achieve Goal 5.

Objectives:

Develop a compelling ad campaign for human rights that makes our cause attractive in the face of increasing attacks from world leaders.

Produce more HRE-related outputs that explain human rights fundamentals in an engaging and populist way. They should present human rights concepts as questions of basic values – showing what is at stake is the kind of society we want to live in, the freedom to speak your mind, and be who you are. These can take forms such as explainers, graphics or “key facts”.

Set a benchmark for outputs on issues like housing, health, and education and other economic, social and cultural rights. Work on gender equality and tackling discrimination should also increase.

Present human rights in a more relevant way for their cultural contexts e.g in MENA and for China. Intro Amnesty in regions where we are relatively new and unheard of.

Identify a handful of comms campaigns which run for a minimum of 12 months in order to show Amnesty being persistent on important issues. These must meet our aim of engaging more people.

Listen to how audiences are talking about the key issues upon which we want to have impact. Frame the debate in language that they use.

Work with neuroscientists to ensure the best framing and wording for issues

I Goals and objectives

Goal: Tell the story of change

Light a candle – don't just curse the darkness. When people see and hear about the work that Amnesty does, they should come away with a sense that change is possible and that we are striving to make that happen. Previous brand research showed people don't know what our impact is and that we make people feel helpless. People ignore lost causes and instead support organisations that seem to have momentum behind them.

Objectives:

More outputs that show impact. We shout about human rights wins and the changes that we have brought about, including the large and small actions that made the difference. We should also update audiences on the journey rather than be seen making a big bang at the beginning of an issue, and then after a long period of silence being seen shouting "success"!

Celebrate the power that people have by showing human rights defenders and activists doing things and having impact. We must be closer to communities and be publicists for their work.

We will create more space on our channels for grassroots voices, especially through user-generated content. We will produce guidelines and capacity building to this end.

Create brand ambassadors from across the Amnesty movement. Identify star spokespeople at every level across the movement who can show the world what they do every day to make change happen.

Produce an annual report that details Amnesty's impact and what has been achieved thanks to the money with which people have entrusted us.

I Goals and objectives

Goal: Equip the movement to communicate better

Amnesty is on a journey where communications is fully recognized as a change agent and not just a reactive publicity service or content factory. Further, communications is not the preserve of the comms team - everybody has to represent the organization online and help our work to reach more people. Many researchers wish to diversify their outputs into what would normally be seen as the work of the comms team. We emphatically encourage this and look to a future where Amnesty is a comms-centred organization - essential to our continued growth and relevance to audiences. The comms team will facilitate this journey.

Objectives:

Provide training that will help to:

- Build video, design and digital skills
- Keep Amnesty at the forefront of new communications techniques and technologies
- Message effectively
- Cut jargon in favour of plain and accessible language
- Analyse audiences
- Communicate creatively

Improve and encourage dialogue and collaboration between sections and with the IS, so that learnings, initiatives, successes and ideas are shared more readily across the movement

Empower content producers around the world by creating and maintaining guidelines on what it means to make content for Amnesty and which ensure quality and consistency of outputs

Prepare an annual report on audience insights to inform campaigners, researchers and other non-communications colleagues.

Invite sections to share their audience research in a common space and present new research at existing meetings and teleconferences

Improve the mix of production assets available to sections, including printed items and merchandise

Push for more comms resource in regional offices, particularly in video

Encourage creative collaboration with comms teams at the inception of research missions/ projects and campaigns rather than near the end, so that work is designed for comms impact

I Goals and objectives

Goal: Maximise our reach

We are already one of the top performing international NGOs both in terms of media hits and digital engagement. We are not satisfied with this though as there are too many people not aware of us or our cause. Amnesty wants to have 25 million supporters by 2020. We will not achieve this unless our communications have reached and consistently excited many more millions than that number. Our reach has to increase so that we can also increase our number of members and donors.

Objectives:

Increase our earned media coverage

- Work with sections to make dashboards available across the movement

Increase our engagement on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube

- Make dashboards available of global secretariat channels and coordinate reporting on section channels

Markedly increase the number of videos that we produce for digital platforms

Identify and work with influencers and micro-influencers to build our supporter base. This means using social listening and other tools to strategically identify people, and work with them on a consistent basis on key issues

Put in place better systems to commission content based on demand from sections

Better visibility in our platform and channel performance by using consistent approaches to analytics and KPIs

Set aggressive communications benchmarks for engagement growth. Use analytics to refine our communications.

Agree countries where secretariat teams should prioritise content and digital marketing spend

Spend as much on content promotion as we do on content production

Ensure we are making the most of audience insight tools and sharing that insight across the movement

Expand our presence across new channels where audiences that we want to target are e.g. podcasts, local radio.

| What we make

We supply content for use on section channels and international member channels. This is tailored for these channels, and designed to achieve impact in earned media, social media engagement and for fundraising. A typical content package for a medium-to-large issue should therefore consist of:

- Press release
- Facebook video
- YouTube video
- Suggested wording for Twitter and other social media posts
- Images
- Text for websites
- Text for emails
- Text for email a few days/weeks later following up with progress on the issue



Images

To capture attention in the digital age, highly visual story-telling is essential: images, photography, short videos and [info]graphics. The communications department will help the organization to shift from a predominantly words-based organization to one that tells its stories visually in order to remain abreast of technological and communications trends.

Grassroots voices

We need to focus more on User Generated Content, grassroots and individual voices – content we don't 'own' but that sits on our channel as collaborative projects with activists, rights-holders etc. We're supposed to be an international movement and we don't currently reflect that in our content.

Hope, not fear

We will focus much more on our successes and telling a positive story of change powered from the grassroots and up. Emotions we want to trigger are hope, inspiration, and enthusiasm rather than doom and gloom. This means we need positive and hopeful content. There is also a time and place for directed and articulate anger or outrage. We must always emphasize how our supporters are part of the solution and make these audiences feel valued.

We will seek the overlap between telling the story people want to hear, and the story we want to tell, looking for positive entry points into difficult subjects to show that together, we have the power to change things.

We will liberate our staff to communicate the Amnesty story in their own words and voices, with passion and conviction. We encourage activists and people at the grassroots to communicate in ways that are relevant to them, about the things they care about.

Overall we need to find ways to always show what Amnesty does, what we stand for, why we do it, why it is important to support it - in a nutshell, showing (more than telling) that Amnesty exists for human rights.

I What we make

Balanced outputs

Our goals and objectives necessitate a shift in our content production. The breakdown we will aspire to is:

- **33% News** – reactive and planned work, report launches etc
- **34% Story of Change** – grassroots stories, people doing and achieving things, profiles of staff, activists and rights holders
- **33% Making the case for human rights** – explain why they matter and how they benefit people

Press outputs will not be guided by the above breakdown though. As earned coverage still follows the maxim of “If it bleeds, it leads”, there will likely be a higher percentage of reactive work and “hard news” here. Press releases even on the grimmest issues will still seek to present solutions, activism and hope though.

For researchers and campaigners, the implication here is that issues will either have to be newsworthy to command attention, or they will have to show people taking action. Highlighting problems with neither of these attributes is unlikely to gain traction with movement communicators, and most crucially, the public we seek to influence.

Tone of voice

The way we speak needs to be in tune with how our audiences communicate. We often sound distant and cold, boring and technical. Paragraph-long sentences with several sub-clauses and complex terminology will not capture hearts and minds.

Instead of saying “Amnesty is...”, we’ll speak like we’re one giant human being, using words like “we”, “our”, “us”. Instead of saying “governments must act”, let’s name the people with the power to create change and the difference they could make: “Trump could give thousands new hope by dropping X policy”.

We need to sound warm and authentic, relaxed and clear. We should be seen having fun from time to time. That also means letting go and empowering activists and staff to do their own talking in their own voices.

Language

Content should be produced in the language of the primary audience for that content. Translations in these instances do not work as well. Language should be taken into consideration from the outset as a core element of this audience-first approach. Requisite time should be given for translations into other languages.

Advertising

One area of comms that Amnesty has potential to get more from is advertising. Advertising campaigns have been influential in changing views on major issues like gender, equal marriage, and race relations. It can also be a huge generator of engagement, as seen by Amnesty Poland’s hugely successful Look Beyond Borders video.

We will prioritize issues for advertising treatment and dedicate resource to this. Sections also have good agency collaborations and we will therefore look to share materials across the movement.

I Who do we make it for

Amnesty communicators should primarily be managing the needs of audiences, not the needs of internal stakeholders. As an organization that seeks to change minds and move large numbers of people to action, it is vital that we always know who we are talking to and what we need to tell them to get their attention and make them receptive to our arguments. We must select our stories well, but we must also know to what will move our audience to action.

Data

There is no one global audience. All our communications must target carefully segmented audiences, in co-operation with sections, the global supporter engagement programme and regional teams.

We will mainstream use of social listening tools to facilitate better targeting of specific campaigns and assets. We will monitor news and search engine trends to keep abreast of the questions people are asking.

Key factors we are looking for when sharing audience insights are: audience personas, attitudes to human rights; issues/themes that people are passionate about; psychographic/demographic breakdowns of what works with whom. We also want to identify the positive human values (or moral principles) that inspire people to connect emotionally with human rights issues. For example, if we find that a certain audience segment has a strong belief in community, compassion, equality or generosity, we can play on these values in our communications to motivate them to join us.

In order to cater effectively to audiences around the world, it will be crucial for people across the movement to share audience insights more regularly and in greater detail through quarterly audience and messaging updates.

I Who we make it for

Beyond the bubble

We must move beyond our base of hard core human rights believers to attract people in the persuadable middle. Audience analysis gleaned from across the Amnesty movement, published in the document “Beyond the Bubble”, recommends a number of actions in order to do this:

1. Better introduce ourselves as an organization i.e. don't assume that people have heard of us and know what we do
2. Be plain and accessible, reducing jargon
3. Be youthful
4. Audiences need to hear about our impact
5. Show that we have the best interests of our communities and countries at heart
6. Show why human rights matter, addressing the issues audiences care about, like free speech
7. Highlight stories of people (our staff, supporters, activists and the people they defend) more than big, intractable issues
8. Discrimination and economic rights are big issues
9. We need to trigger positive emotions

Youth

Amnesty UK's communication strategy identifies an ageing brand: the median age of people who know something about Amnesty is 48. Our larger sections typically want to drive down their average age, and our newer ones also are looking to younger audiences to fuel their growth. Communications for our own platforms should therefore serve this end in terms of content and tone.

Geographies

Goal 5 work has identified MENA, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America as the regions ripe for member and supporter growth. Op-eds, interviews and social media spend that targets publics in our growth membership markets are vital in Amnesty pursuit of growth. This content should be global in nature, and not just about those specific countries or regions. This necessitates that comms workers are extremely aware of language needs in order to achieve reach.

Europe, North America and Oceania are primary fundraising markets. Amnesty must remain relevant here in order to sustain our movement and grow financially. We also remain cognizant of geopolitical realities. Media markets in the US and Western Europe are still important for the setting of global debate.

On a global level, this means that we will prioritize the production of content that will reach the most amount of people – content such as responses to big issues, success stories and evergreen explainers that can be adapted to specific audiences. We will work with sections to identify demand on issues and stories to inform commissioning decisions. Global comms will support regional offices with extra firepower where this audience and section demand exists.

I How we reach the public

1. The secretariat produces content for use on the social media channels of our sections and its own few international member channels.
2. All channels across the movement cater for their audience. Amongst this disparate content we will provide regular threads of priority and storytelling by providing compelling content, involving channel managers as early as possible in the process.
3. Across all channels, we want to ensure that content creators are creating content in accordance with best practice and with innovation.
4. We want to be audience-led in our approach to our social media channels. Constantly monitoring our channels and engagement will ensure that we employ the appropriate tactics to the target audience across each channel. We must be agile: not necessarily sticking to “The Plan” if we gather insights that help us optimize our communications. For example, we can employ social listening across all channels which could help us identify a newly trending hashtag on Twitter we haven’t been using as part of a digital engagement project. Adapting our messaging to fit this in is being agile and channel-led.
5. Video is crucial in tactics across channels and cannot be understated. We will employ varying types of videos as part of our communications work: from short explainer evergreen pieces through to dynamic Instagram Stories or Facebook Live. Video must be seen as creatively as possible within our work- we will not tie ourselves to a “one video will fit all channels and target audiences” but diversify outputs e.g. taking shorter clips to form a series on Instagram, presenting an otherwise dull explainer with lighter anecdotal content from a young influencer’s involvement.
6. When relevant, we should be tactical in cross-posting content from Global, Regional and Section channels to optimize views and/or reach. For example, sharing a Livestream happening on Amnesty USA’s Facebook page from Amnesty Global will maximize reach.

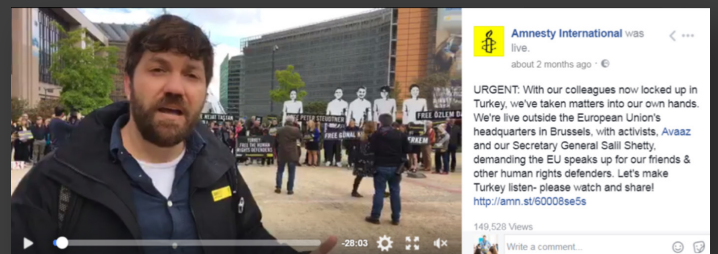
I How we reach the public

KEY CHANNELS

Facebook

This is widely seen as the main campaigning platform and content here can have more longevity. We should aim to post 1-2 times a day. Based on the engagement pyramid (where social media followers are at the bottom, converting to supporters and then members) we should treat this platform as being a key path for many users to turn from followers to taking action and so on. With that in mind, we will look to ensure 30% of our content is conversion-based, while 70% is engagement-focused. This percentage split will be reviewed 6 months from this strategy being operational

- i. Content types for the channel will be based on different objectives: Video to raise awareness and gather most reach, graphics to fit header image on link-only posts to generate click-throughs to site and gifs intended for in-platform engagement (shares)
- ii. We can make a clear distinction between timely content that has a shelf life (in the news cycle, or an urgent reactive online action) and more long-lasting evergreen content (explainer videos, “on this day in history” engagement posts) and ensure we balance our approach here to combine the two, the former being key for new supporters/conversion and the latter helping with brand identity and retention.
- iii. Paid activity: We should maintain a rolling promotion for daily posts, with the inverted split of 70% to conversion content, and 30% for engagement-focused content, with the respective aims of pushing more fans through the conversion funnel (going from 5% of supporting fans to 15%), and improving reach both overall and for lower-performing posts in particular (by 50% on average).



Facebook Live from an Amnesty protest

Tactics: Facebook Live for timely events, using paid media to boost content, re-targeting viewers with an action following a video post, sharing (not duplicating) the same video/post across multiple Amnesty Facebook pages- this will allow for each page to appear as if the post is ‘original’ but will aggregate data in one post, appearing as ‘one’ Amnesty for key events or hooks.

I How we reach the public

KEY CHANNELS

Twitter

This channel is even timelier than Facebook, so we have more freedom to post frequently- our Twitter accounts should aim to have between 4 and 8 original posts throughout the day, alongside subtweets and RTs.

- i. The secretariat's global @amnesty handle will serve as a 24hr go-to source for what's happening with support across Regional Offices and/or Sections.
- ii. We should look to amplify staff profiles by: encouraging live-tweeting of important events, identifying a staff's Twitter handle as the on-the-ground expert during a crisis, consistently sub-tweeting and retweeting expert voices on issues, rather than focusing solely on original tweets from official Amnesty accounts



Tactics:

- i. Content can be directed at someone in particular as a social media target e.g. Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei who is very active on Twitter.
- ii. We can maximize visibility of our content amongst niche audience or group of targets by tagging handles in to the photo (e.g. influencers you wish to view it/RT, world leaders all attending a global summit).

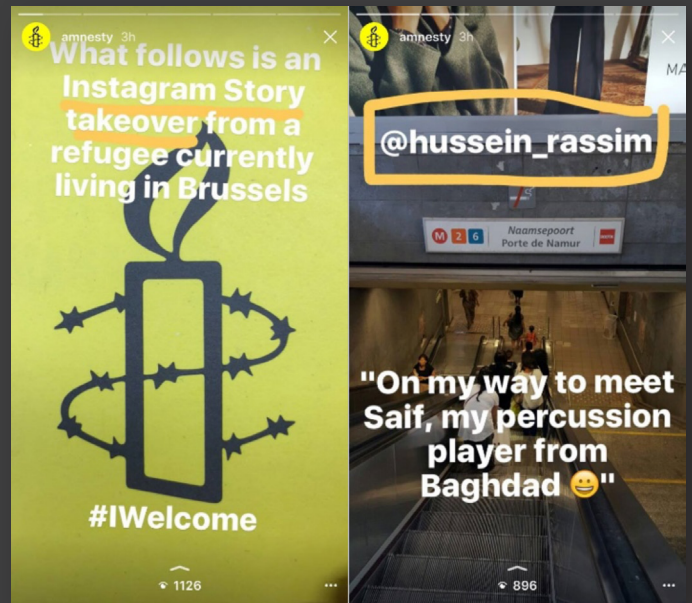
Amnesty researcher posts video from the field on Twitter

I How we reach the public

KEY CHANNELS

Instagram

This is the most visual of the three; strong photography is key and majority of the content here will not be action-driven. This is a brand awareness channel with a heavier focus on engagement. There is also a 'raw' element to Instagram Stories that allows for atmosphere-building content live on the ground, and as it disappears after 24 hours. It's an ideal platform for HRE content.



Refugees takeover the Amnesty Instagram account

Tactics:

- i. With capacity-building training where necessary we will increase use of Instagram Stories as a tactic, aiming to host "takeovers" by staff sharing content on the ground to give our supporters an authentic sense of us being present during crises and other human rights violations.
- ii. Engage with youth activists and influencers to amplify grassroots voices and appeal to new audiences, respectively.
- iii. Make the most of ability to add direct click-through links in Stories to drive traffic to a page- ensuring this is tracked to measure and benchmark over time. This can range from creative narration leading to an urgent online action, or awareness-raising explainers sending people to a blog post or news article.

I How we reach the public

KEY CHANNELS

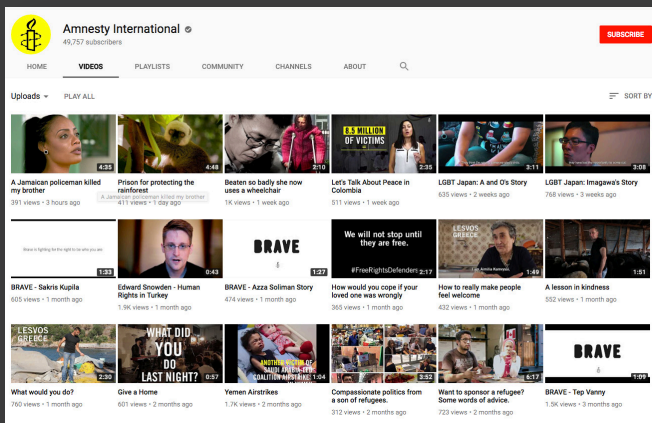
YouTube

YouTube is by far the largest video community on the internet. YouTube has become the second largest website on the Internet and the second largest search engine. People and blogs make up 40% of the content and 40% of Youtube views come through mobile devices. Users spend more time on Youtube than users on other social media platform.

Through strong storytelling we aim to; increase awareness of our brand, issues and campaigns, encourage interaction both in and outside the platform and effectively share information, either as regular features or as explanations.

We aim to have 3-4 formats/playlists on our Youtube channel. Each format will have a recognisable and consistent style and purpose. They will be budgeted and supported with an annual appraisal. The vast majority of the content will be planned (as opposed to reactive) and people-focussed (as opposed to issue-led). Sound will play a far greater role than it does on other social platforms.

We are currently evaluating our Youtube channel and potential formats with an aim to deliver a more detailed strategy early 2018.



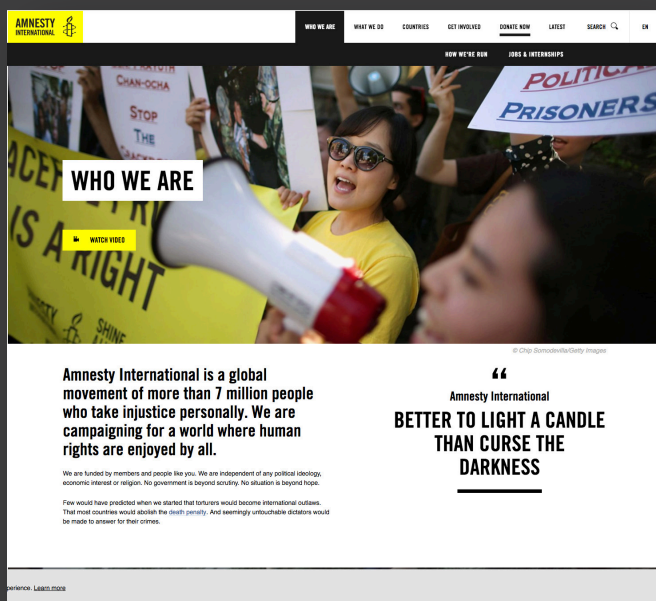
Amnesty International on YouTube

I How we reach the public

KEY CHANNELS

Website

Our website enables longer form content, provides the next stage of the journey from social media channels, and the continuation in user journeys to conversion. The site allows users to investigate both the work we are doing and ways to get involved.



amnesty.org

With 50% of users accessing Amnesty.org through organic search, we must ensure that we remain relevant and current in search rankings, which includes producing content specifically for this purpose.

We need to continue to optimize our website based on insight and testing to ensure we are meeting audience needs. We should ensure that all key content links to simple and attractive ways to join and get involved. Our work should focus on the following areas:

- Review the structure and flexibility of the website to better reflect audience needs for regional content. At the moment regional content has to compete with globally focused content for space on the website. This one size fits all approach will become increasingly less suitable as the amount of regional content continues to grow
- Provide better options for grouping thematic content, i.e. content relating to specific human rights issues or campaigns. This will allow us to communicate more clearly about our ongoing work and highlight long term successes
- Increase the accessibility, visibility and presentation of our research content.
- Continually review and optimize the platform, including reassessing language support as we grow in new markets
- Continually grow the channel audience in line with our annual forecasts
- Create a funnel of engagement to push users to the local/section level
- Audit - and train content creators to fix - current pages according to the SEO guidelines document
- Prioritize the development of evergreen content that is optimized to new users or supporters that might be encountering Amnesty and the human rights debate for the first time

I How we reach the public

KEY CHANNELS

Media (earned)

- Our aim is to ensure our impact is maximized nationally, regionally and globally across all media platforms – broadcast, print and digital
 - We position Amnesty as a voice of authority on human rights issues through our planned research and campaign work, with a range of strategic targeted media outputs. Increasing our media impact is therefore heavily reliant on research and campaigning that has audience resonance
 - We maintain Amnesty's relevance with timely response to breaking reactive and planned reactive news outputs
 - Our media messaging will strive to always include: a surprising statistic, a powerful human story and a clear solution/call to action
 - We speak to journalists and other specialist audiences utilizing most appropriate channels and tactics- for example, a live Periscope from @amnestypress during a press conference
 - News outlets are a medium for reaching large audiences beyond our current followers. Media coverage in outlets with a strong online presence (especially youth orientated outlets like BuzzFeed, Upworthy and Mashable) are crucial to increasing the social media impact of our content
 - We target our content at the outlets audiences are drawn to, beyond the traditional media we often go for, partnering with new outlets, platforms, influencers, etc. e.g community radio stations, people with their own YouTube channels, etc
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