

Insats, English Summary, #6 June 2021

Calendar:

4-7 JULY: Nordic Youth Conference

2 SEPTEMBER: Meeting Time for Change

23 SEPTEMBER: Campaign: Dawit Isaak

A greeting from chairperson Parul Sharma

On October 3rd 2020 I was chosen as chairperson of Amnesty Sweden. Since then the board and I have been working intensely to tackle some of the challenges we have identified. Our organisation have been seeing recurring deficits (since 2018 a total of -26,6 million SEK), co-workers have testified about expressions of racism and discrimination at the workplace and over half of the staff say that they can not recommend Amnesty as an employer. The situation is serious and a responsible board has to act. A well functioning, inclusive secretariat is of great importance for us to be able to be the strong force for human rights that both the board – and you, members and activists – want us to be.

In December 2020 the board and the former secretary general Anna Lindenfors decided to part ways. As the spokesperson of the board, I was available to media, members, activists and staff 24 hours a day. I have deliberately kept to the same message. Amnesty Sweden is a large organisation with staff, a board of directors, middle management, union representatives, committee of inquiry, elected representatives and activists. In this work we all have a role to play – and no single person can and should be the scapegoat. The board and I have done our best to make this clear and to show Anna Lindenfors, who has given seven years of her working life to run and develop Amnesty, the respect she deserves.

When Amnesty Press commented on the “crisis at Amnesty”, I was asked to make a statement. As I described in Insats in April, I understand that my answer to Amnesty Press generated feelings. In response I feel that I have received harsh and aggressive emails from members and activists. I have been called anti democratic, unable to understand the freedom of speech, and that I have no respect for the freedom of the press. I have devoted my entire work life to human rights. To get these comments feels both unfair and destructive. When we email and speak to each other within the movement, I believe that it is important for us to weigh our words, because hearing such harsh words is devastating. We are Amnesty and we need to be more empathic in the way we communicate with each other.

The board and I have gotten recurring emails about Amnesty Sweden’s internal equality work. Why do we choose to focus on these questions when the rest of the world is in flames? I want to make clear how important this internal work is for us – ultimately it is about our credibility! Especially when our external advocacy and campaign work insists on the equal value of all human beings. A clear human rights principle is to put your own house in order first and practice what you preach. Our internal equality work and our anti-racist work does not mean that we are taking resources from the work with right to abortions or the fight

for prisoners of conscience! But this work is important since we have staff and activists who feel unsafe within Amnesty. Amnesty has to be a safe space!

In my short time as chairperson I have received several racist emails, from individuals claiming to be members. These people don't want a muslim as chairperson and claim that that is the reason for Amnesty's current crisis. The day of the Annual General Meeting I found a handwritten note outside the door of my apartment. In neat letters someone wrote: "Mrs Chairperson, if you have a problem with the N-word you can resign. You are the worst thing to happen to us."

I will not leave my post, but will stay the full term I was elected. I will continue to work together with the rest of the board, always with Amnesty's best interest in mind.

We are Amnesty, we come in different colours, backgrounds, heritages, but we are all humans and we all work together with **one** goal – that human rights should apply to everyone, always.

We are Amnesty and we always have to be a bit more empathetic than others. Our organisation and movement is going to be a safe space free from racism, hatred and threats. We are the biggest human rights organisation and are working for every person's equal value and rights. Therefore it should also be a natural part of our commitment, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

In solidarity,
Parul Sharma

Aleksej Navalnyj is a prisoner of conscience

In February 2020 Amnesty made an internal decision to no longer use the term "prisoner of conscience" when speaking about Aleksej Navalnyj. This decision was based on the discriminatory statements he made in 2007 and 2008 which were deemed to be on the verge of hate propaganda. We did not intend to go public with the decision but continue our work for Navalnyj's release. When the decision was made public, the Russian government used this to further violate Navalnyj's human rights.

We acted in a way that harmed Navalnyj but that does not take away from our credibility in defending his rights. We have after careful evaluation decided to again name him a prisoner of conscience. Amnesty made the wrong decision and we apologize for the negative impact this has had on Aleksej personally and activists working for his release in Russia and the rest of the world.

Amnesty deeming someone a prisoner of conscience does not mean we stand behind all their views. Some of Navalnyj's previous statements are reprehensible and we do not condone them in any way. We are a human rights organisation and will continue to fight racism and discrimination in all and any forms.

We are starting a general review of how the term "prisoner of conscience" is used. It will run during 2021 and we will return with clear recommendations.

Do you have any questions about how Amnesty uses the term prisoner of conscience? You are welcome to email me at anna.johansson@amnesty.se

Anna Johansson / anna.johansson@amnesty.se

Participate in a letter writing campaign against the proposal on new migration legislation

The parliament is voting on the proposition to make parts of what has been a temporary and limiting legislation on migration to be permanent. This means, among other things, temporary residence permits instead of permanent ones and requirements for maintenance and housing of a certain size in order to be entitled to family reunification.

Amnesty criticized the bill when the temporary law was voted through in 2016. We believe that the law will have major consequences for individuals and a negative impact on the actual respect for refugee status. We have therefore decided that we will do what we did during the campaign SOS Sweden in 2016. We will write letters to members of parliament and ask them to vote no to the proposition.

Do you want to take part in this important letter campaign? Contact Hilda Forssell at hilda.forssell@amnesty.se.

Hilda Forssell / hilda.forssell@amnesty.se

The activists who took home the Activist Prizes of 2020!

During the final part of the section's Annual General Meeting, Sunday May 9th, the winners of 2020 three activist prizes were chosen. Three awards were given out, the Great Creativity Award, the Great Activity Award and the Great Commitment Award.

The Great Creativity Award was given to Amnesty Latinamerika, for their amazing work for the right to abortion. Under the hashtag #ståuppföraborträkten (Stand up for the right to abortion) the group arranged a whole week of campaigning with art exhibitions, digital vernissages, workshops and virtual manifestations and supported and spread information about the movement for the right to abortion in Latin America.

The Great Activity Award was given to Amnesty Sápmi, who in an exemplary way have advanced Amnesty International's positioning when it comes to the work for Sami peoples rights in Sweden.

Close cooperation with rights holders, great local knowledge and the ability to break through both medially and in public contexts have made this great success possible. A successful organisation structure and an industrious work by everyone in the group additionally resulted in the groups growing, which continues sustainably.

The winner of the Great Commitment Award was Peter Nässén, with an astounding number of 11 nominations and over 40 years of commitment under the belt. Peter has been a great force in Amnesty Sweden's work for human rights in China, with for example the much appreciated newsletter 'Kinapuffen' - diligently read by people both within and outside the organisation. Peter is the long time group secretary of Group 175, based in Gothenburg. The group acts as China coordinators within Amnesty and it is clear to everyone that has followed Amnesty's work over time that Peter's work has meant a boost for Amnesty's engagement in China.

Julia Karlsson / julia.karlsson@amnesty.se / 070 914 46 81

Participate in influencing Amnesty Sweden's new long-term strategy?

This autumn, Amnesty Sweden will consult the movement on issues relating to the new long-term strategy.

Based on the global strategy that will be decided at the General Assembly in September, Sweden will prioritize the HR issues we as a section will work with during the period 2022-2030. It will be possible to contribute in different ways, partly through thematic focus groups but also through digital dialogue. More information will come at the end of June.

Gustaf Hedman / gustaf.hedman@amnesty.se

Our different human rights areas

What areas of human rights (HR) are we working on right now, what have we done in the spring, what is there to do this autumn and who is the contact person at the secretariat?

HR area: Freedom of expression, meeting and association

Contact person at the secretariat: Fartun Andersson Ramnemo

What have we done so far this year?

- The global campaign Ban the Scan (a campaign against face recognition technology) was launched. The first part of the campaign has focused on New York where activists have been able to help map surveillance cameras through Amnesty Decoders
- We have acted for people whose freedom of assembly and expression has been restricted in connection with protests around the world. Group 137 organised a campaign around Formula 1 for Bahraini opposition politicians who have been imprisoned for ten years.

How you can contribute to change now:

- Amnesty supports the initiative Reclaim your face: a petition against biometric mass monitoring in the EU.

- Within Ban the Scan, we shift our focus from New York to India. Contact Fartun if you want to participate.

What is planned for the rest of the year:

- In September, it is 20 years since Dawit Isaak was imprisoned. The anniversary is an important date for us to campaign for Dawit and the other prisoners of conscience to be released.
- After the campaign for Dawit we start with this year's Write for Rights campaign.

Fartun Andersson Ramnemo / fartun.andersson-ramnemo@amnesty.se / 0709 14 41 52

HR area: Women's rights, sexual and reproductive rights and LBTQI rights.

Contact person at the secretariat: Julia Karlsson

What have we done so far this year?

- International Women's Day where femicides in Mexico received special attention
- Planning our work within the campaign Time for Change
- We have worked with the campaign #translagNU which aims to bring about a change in the gender affiliation law and strengthen transgender people's rights in the country

How you can contribute to change now:

- Our yearly Pride campaign was launched June 1st. If you want to participate, contact Julia.
- Make sure to sign and share our petition for a new gender affiliation law (amnesty.se/agerahub) which will be handed over to the government at the end of August.

What is planned for the rest of the year:

- The work within Time for Change will launch

Julia Karlsson / julia.karlsson@amnesty.se / 070 914 46 81

HR area: Refugees and migrants' rights

Contact person at the secretariat: Ellinor Hagman and Julia Karlsson

What have we done so far this year?

- The campaign World Cup in Qatar - a party for EVERYONE! was launched. The campaign highlights the situation of migrant workers in Qatar linked to the men's World Cup 2022. So far, we have conducted advocacy work against Qatar, the Swedish Football Association and FIFA.

How you can contribute to change now:

- Our work for the rights of migrant workers continues. Join and write about the World Cup in Qatar, and spread the action on social media

([https://www.amnesty.se/agerahub/krav-att-fifa-star-upp-migrantarbetares-rattigheter-
under-fotbolls-vm-i-qatar/](https://www.amnesty.se/agerahub/krav-att-fifa-star-upp-migrantarbetares-rattigheter-under-fotbolls-vm-i-qatar/))

What is planned for the rest of the year:

- We will arrange another planning meeting to discuss campaign activities in connection with Sweden's World Cup games.

Julia Karlsson, julia.karlsson@amnesty.se / 070 914 46 81

Ellinor Hagman, ellinor.hagman@amnesty.se / 0708 60 41 39

HR area: Equality and economic, social and cultural rights (including vulnerable EU citizens and indigenous peoples' rights)

Contact person at the secretariat: Marianne Gyllenpistol

What have we done so far this year?

- We have phased out the campaign called Också människa, but will continue to work with the right to housing and take a closer look at how municipalities are working against homelessness.
- A collaboration between Amnesty Sápmi and ABG (Amnesty Business Groups) has begun. They will examine state-owned companies that operate on Sami land and how their activities affect Sami rights.

How you can contribute to change now:

- The right to healthcare: call on politicians to issue guidelines that give vulnerable EU citizens access to subsidized care.
- Prohibition of begging: work reactively towards the municipalities that plan to introduce a ban on begging
- It is possible to work with individual cases if you are interested in indigenous rights. The International Secretariat sends out information on actions related to the issue. Let me know if you want to join.

What is planned for the rest of the year:

- Right to healthcare: Continued lobbying towards regions
- Prohibition of begging: continued reactive work
- Right to housing: examination of municipalities' work against homelessness. We hope to be able to arrange a new planning meeting on the topic
- We want to make it possible for more groups to work with indigenous peoples' rights internationally and to develop our work for Sami rights in Sweden. We will also work with the audit of state-owned companies

Marianne Gyllenpistol / marianne.gyllenpistol@amnesty.se / 0707 44 57 93

HR area: Corporate responsibility

Contact person at the secretariat: Karin Danelius

What have we done so far this year?

- A collaboration between Amnesty Sápmi and ABG (Amnesty Business Groups) has begun. They will examine state-owned companies that operate on Sami land and how their activities affect Sami rights.
- We have also focused on ethical batteries linked to climate change. How the pursuit of green and sustainable batteries can have a negative impact on human rights

How you can contribute to change now:

- We will arrange a workshop where we plan what the work with ethical batteries should look like at the beginning of fall. The workshop will be held in English.

What is planned for the rest of the year:

- The examination of the impact of state-owned companies on Sami rights begins
- The campaign for ethical batteries begins. The work will be conducted under the umbrella of corporate responsibility but will also be linked to indigenous peoples' rights.

Karin Danelius / karin.danelius@amnesty.se / 070-197 44 77