

INSATS #7 AUGUST 2020, ENGLISH SUMMARY

Current plans for fall 2020:

September 28: International Safe Abortion Day

September 27: Annual General meeting, AI Sweden.

October 10: International Day against the Death Penalty

November 13-15: Youth and student meeting in Stockholm

December 10: International Human Rights Day

Stand up for the right to abortion right on September 28!

The right to abortion, constantly under threat

In September, the Slovak Parliament will take a position on a new bill that will make it more difficult for women to have an abortion. Slovakia is not the only country where the right to abortion is circumvented and attacked. In countries such as Romania and several US states, the Covid-19 pandemic has been an excuse for restricting access to safe and legal abortion by categorizing it as "unnecessary care." In Poland, attempts were made to push through an almost total ban on abortion during this spring, when the country was largely shut down. Similar bills have previously been stopped after massive protests and demonstrations - something that was hampered by the ongoing pandemic. In countries where healthcare is not developed, the scarce resources to manage Covid-19 are now redistributed, often at the expense of other care. The pandemic has also occurred in countries where a positive change is underway. In Argentina, the promise of new progressive legislation guaranteeing the right to abortion has been put on hold, at least temporarily.

Marginalization and poverty limit the access to abortion

Some countries have very restrictive abortion laws or prohibitions. Such laws always hit the most marginalized and vulnerable, such as women in poverty, teenage girls, women from minority groups or migrants who have not been able to pay for safe (but illegal) abortions or travel abroad to have an abortion where it is legal. Travel bans and deteriorating personal finances in the wake of the pandemic have limited that possibility even for those who could previously afford it. This also applies to domestic travel in countries where women have to travel to another part of the country when healthcare professionals have invoked their private beliefs and refused to provide the care requested.

There is no doubt that corona affects human reproductive health and rights in the long run. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, has warned that a further 47 million women in 114 low- and middle-income countries may run out of modern contraception due to supply chain disruptions. Even before the pandemic, about 220 million lacked access to such contraceptives. Combined with increased violence against women, including rape and other sexual violence in times of quarantine and isolation, it could lead to an additional 7 million unwanted pregnancies

over a six-month period, according to the UN. And when the availability of safe and legal abortion decreases, the dangerous and illegal abortions increase instead. This in turn leads to more cases of maternal mortality.

September 28 is the International Safe Abortion Day and perhaps it is more important than ever to stand up for every individual's right to sexual, reproductive health - and the right to choose. We will continue to work against bills similar to the Slovak one and for the right to free abortion, something that may soon become a reality in Argentina. In this struggle, we must mobilize and come together - and bring others with us.

Amnesty+ RFSU is standing up for the right to abortion

This year we will join the RFSU campaign "Stand up for the right to abortion" and make our struggle for the right to abortion visible. Take the opportunity to organise (safe) events to put the spotlight on the right to safe and legal abortion.

There will be posters and info sheets for campaigning. We also have access to the film "When women won", about the fight for the decriminalisation of abortion in Ireland, if you want to arrange a film screening!

More information will be sent regularly to all groups signing up for the campaign at aktivism.amnesty.se/kvinnorsrattigheter.

Sanna Blomgren and Katarina Bergehed
sanna.blomgren@amnesty.se

BLACK LIVES MATTER - TAKE ACTION!

"I can't breathe" These were George Floyd's last words when a policeman stood with his knee against his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

George Floyd was an unarmed black man in the USA who died amid a violent arrest on 25 May 2020 in the US state of Minnesota. A grocery clerk had called the police thinking George was trying to use forged currency in the store, but that phone call proved to be fatal when the police arrived. If the police hadn't used force unlawfully, George would still be alive today. After the killing of George Floyd, demonstrations swept the USA and many other countries demanding an end to police abuses and killings, particularly of black people. People protesting in the streets of the USA have been met with the repression and excessive use of force they are protesting against.

The United States needs much stronger national standards to provide parameters on the use of force and restrict the use of deadly force in law—not just in a police department's policy—to ensure accountability when these boundaries are breached by law enforcement officers. Law

enforcement officers must respect people's human rights, including the right to equal protection of the law, freedom from discrimination, the right to be safe, and most importantly, the right to survive an interaction with law enforcement officers.

The death of George Floyd has changed the world, and all eyes are on the USA. It is time to implement meaningful change.

What can we do?

By exposing the pervasive trend of police abuse of power across the United States, Amnesty International will apply international pressure on US federal government agencies and Congress, and cultivate support for and ensure the passage of legislation that will result in systemic changes to policing in the USA.

Resources

There is a poster, an info sheet and a petition for printing at aktivistportalen. Don't hesitate to use the printers at the local offices (in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö and Lund) if needed (get in contact with the regional team before visiting the offices, since most staff work from home).

The posters, info sheets and petitions are sent to all student and youth groups automatically, but any Amnesty group is welcome to take part in the campaign.

Campaign period:

All signatures must be sent to the secretariat no later than 30 September!

Sign up!

More information and registration form is to be found at aktivism.amnesty.se/blm. By registering, you have the opportunity to get more information, updates and feedback on what is happening in the matter.

Sara Bessa
sara.bessa@amnesty.se

Urgent action

Russian Konstantin Kotov was sentenced to four years in prison in 2019 for participating in peaceful protests. He participated in protests for other activists who had been innocently convicted. He was sentenced to 1.5 years in prison.

If Constantine's verdict is not overturned, there is a risk that it will be prejudicial in other cases - which means that more activists can be sentenced to prison for having participated in peaceful

protests. We must take action now! He is having a hard time in prison, and needs our support. On aktivistportalen, you will find instructions for writing letters and emails to the prosecutor, and for sending solidarity greetings to Konstantin in prison.

More info on the case and instructions on how to take actions is found at aktivism.amnesty.se/aktioner

Send me an email if taking action!
Beatrice Schönning
beatrice.schonning@amnesty.se

The International Day Against the Death Penalty is approaching!

On October 10, we will turn the public's attention to the Death Penalty in the United States. You can already register to participate in at aktivistportalen. We will keep you updated with instructions, information about training opportunities and how to order campaign materials.

Sign up and info: aktivism.amnesty.se/dodsstraff

Olivia Linander
olivia.linander@amnesty.se

Sign up for AI Sweden's first digital AGM!

The Annual General Meeting will for the first time be organised online. This means adjustments in the program and the length of the meeting. Nevertheless it will probably be one of the most exciting things that happens digitally this year! The meeting will run for a week with discussions, decisions and inspiration. This year's international speaker is Dávid Vig, Secretary General of the Hungarian Section, who will talk about human rights in Hungary. A warm welcome to our first digital annual meeting starting on September 27!

When?

The annual meeting will start on Sunday, September 27 at 16:00 and will continue at 18:00 Monday to Friday and Saturday October 3 at 10.

The complete program will be published at amnesty.se/årsmöte on 4 September.

Registration is made at amnesty.se/årsmöte! Hope to see you and do not hesitate to contact me for questions!

Karin Ledin da Rosa
karin.darosa@amnesty.se