

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## **Amnesty International USA: Guidelines for Members Joining Rapid Response Mobilizations**

In the past few weeks we have seen a historic outpouring of support, solidarity and resistance in cities across the United States. This sense of urgency has grown out of what feels to many as a political crisis, and for Amnesty members around the world, a series of human rights crises. Whether you and members of your community are responding to the Executive Orders of the Trump Administration or violence in your community, Amnesty members have an important role to play in both responding strategically and sustaining a strategic response.

As a non-partisan organization, Amnesty International is committed to holding all government officials accountable to human rights. Just like Amnesty members in the United States and around the world demanded accountability and transparency from the Obama Administration, so too will we continue to do the same with the Trump Administration. Just as we target Republicans to sponsor or support human rights-friendly policy and speak out for human rights, so too do we push Democrats and others, regardless of party affiliation.

### **Crisis Response**

In times of crisis, when you need to rapidly respond to what is happening in your community, we want to make sure to provide support and guidance in how you as an AIUSA activist can show up to your local actions. Whether you are new to protesting and direct action organizing, or you have been a human rights activist for a long time, these guidelines are for any AIUSA members wondering how to get involved with actions happening in your community.

Before joining or organizing a solidarity action here are some questions you should ask yourself and your group:

1. ***Is there a crisis?*** Are there credible reports of individuals and/or communities at risk of abuse or violation? Is there an emergency that has quickly and significantly increased the risk of human rights violations by state or other actors?
2. ***Can we support?*** Have you reached out to local organizers from the affected community? Have you checked in with your Field Organizer to see if this action falls within our policies and scope of work?
3. ***What do we bring to the table?*** What are concrete resources and support that you bring to the organizing space? Is it people power, strategic connections or skills, physical resources, social media amplification, or something else? Make sure that you are able to offer something valuable to the local efforts.

Use these guidelines to help you plan your action. If you have questions that are not answered by this document, please send them to [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org). This is just one of many resources, and if you are interested in more of a briefing on policies and best-practices, keep your eye out for upcoming trainings or write to [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org).



### **1. I want to go to a protest but haven't been before, what do I need to know?**

First of all, welcome to the resistance! Here are some resources that can help you with preparing to join an action for the first time: [Right to Protest Kit](#) & [Safety During Protest](#).

Secondly, make sure to let your Field Organizer know that you and/or your group is planning on attending an action. If you don't know who your Field Organizer is or are having trouble getting connected, please email: [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org) and they will make sure to connect you.

### **2. Can I attend a protest or demonstration in my Amnesty International capacity?**

Yes, if it is a nonviolent action and doesn't go against Amnesty policy. Check [www.amnestyusa.org/news](http://www.amnestyusa.org/news) to see if AIUSA has issued a statement about the issue at the core of the protest. Reach out to your Field Organizer for guidance if you're not sure. If you don't know who your Field Organizer is, write to [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org).

As an organization and as representatives of the organization we do not engage in civil disobedience or civil resistance. Essentially, we do not join protests that intentionally break the law. As an Amnesty member, you can't join an arrestable action like a blockade or sit-in, and you need to follow police instructions to disperse if they are given.

Also, Amnesty doesn't call for "regime change". So, no, Amnesty can't endorse an "Impeach Trump" action.

### **3. What if the march or protest is permitted but then the police give a dispersal order? A police dispersal order is an announcement made via sound system instructing protesters to leave a specific area within a given amount of time.**

Once the police give a dispersal order you are required by law to comply. Leave the area immediately make sure when you exit that you walk briskly; do not run. They will give you a set amount of time to vacate the area.

### **4. Are we able to use messaging like "Impeach Trump" or "Dump Trump" as an AIUSA group?**

No, but here are some helpful messaging points you can use:

"Resistance is a Human Right"

"Refugee Rights Are Human Rights"

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“I am a Human Rights Defender”

“#IWelcome Refugees”

“#NoBanNoWall”

“No hate, no fear, refugees/immigrants are welcome here!”

If you have other ideas for slogans, please send them to [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org).

## **5. What type of issues can we organize an action on?**

We campaign on a number of issues, particularly the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, and to defend human rights defenders, including protecting the right to peaceful protest. Top issues include #NoBanNoWall, Refugee Rights, Police Accountability, and the right to peaceful protest. Please refer to [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org) for updates on Priority Campaign work, and notify your Field Organizer about what you'd like to organize (or send them to [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org)). For tips on organizing your own protest, click [here](#), or go to [www.amnestyusa.org/protests](http://www.amnestyusa.org/protests).

## **6. I want to organize a protest but what kind of tactics can we use?**

Your tactics are only limited by local laws and your imagination. You want to make sure that your protest tactics convey the main message that you want the world to hear. Use your voices and your bodies to choreograph an action in a place that you know that government officials and other decision-makers will see you. Contact your Field Organizer to brainstorm tactics.

## **7. Can we work within local coalitions organizing actions in my city/town?**

Yes, especially if it's an issue that Amnesty is campaigning on, like stopping the Muslim Ban, refugee rights, the right to peaceful protest, police accountability. We are a human rights organization, and that covers a lot - from climate change to access to healthcare and more - and these days human rights are under attack from every direction. The key is to check to see if Amnesty has a specific policy position on the issues in the action, and to see what messages Amnesty is pushing. You can check [www.amnestyusa.org/news](http://www.amnestyusa.org/news) for a constant stream of how we're talking about human rights issues, and before you go to an action you should reach out to your Field Organizer for guidance.



## **8. Should I go to a protest by myself?**

It's always a good idea to go with a buddy or with a group, preferably your Amnesty group. You should always let someone know you're going to a protest and check in with them at least once an hour. Make sure to share with your group any medical issues they should be aware of or just have a space to share concerns. It's ok to feel nervous about going to an action. The more people you bring to support you, the safer and more empowered you'll feel.

## **9. If the media asks me a question, can I speak with them?**

If you're clearly identified as being part of Amnesty International, the media may come up to you for your opinion or take on a protest. You are essentially representing the organization on the ground and as a representative are speaking for the organization and not as yourself.

You want to make sure that you are ready with talking points by speaking with your Field Organizer or doing your research by checking out the [Amnesty USA news page](#) for proper messaging.

## **10. What should I bring to a protest? What am I not allowed to bring?**

It's always helpful to have your Activist bag ready to go with the following items: Your ID, a clip board with: printed out sign up sheet, petition, and talking points. Water, Energy Bars, Markers, Pens, Blue Painter's Tape, Duct Tape, Basic First Aid Kit, medication and prescription, poster paper for signs, and of course your Amnesty International banner.

You should NEVER bring weapons or any intoxicants to a protest. Do your homework to find out if there are certain restrictions on items for protests or marches. For instance, at some protests you aren't allowed to bring a large backpack but you can bring a totebag.

## **11. Is it ever appropriate and/or safe to engage with police officers at any time during a protest? If so, under what circumstances?**

Do not engage with the police, unless absolutely necessary, as this has the potential to escalate a situation and cause harm to yourself and those around you. If a situation arises like a medical emergency, find the nearest Emergency Medical Technician or if there is not one available find a police officer that is at a distance from the frontlines of the protest and communicate your issue.



## **12. What legal resources are available to me, should I be arrested or detained?**

Most peaceful protests do not pose risks of arrest or detention. If you find that things are heating up, we recommend staying safe and dispersing. Follow all orders by police officers, especially an order to disperse.

It's always good to check with protest organizers before you go to see if there is jail support, and to get any support phone numbers. If there is one, write it on your arm in sharpie. You can also connect with your local National Lawyer's Guild team or the ACLU to find out if there are more local resources, and to learn your rights when you are detained or arrested.

## **13. I want to go to a protest but i have social anxiety, what can i do to manage?**

We at AIUSA believe that there is a place for everyone in the human rights movement. If you want to go to a protest and have social anxiety, you want to make sure to go with a support network that understands your specific needs. If you are taking medication, bring your medication with you along with a prescription. Do NOT position yourself in the middle of the protest, make sure that you are on the sides or near the end of a protest or march. The most important thing is your safety, and you need to decide if you can be safe enough to go.

## **14. Should I document my participation in a protest or rally using social media? What hashtags should I use?**

You should definitely document your participation at a protest ONLY if you can do so safely. Keep an eye out on our Amnesty International USA Twitter @amnestyusa for hashtags related to actions. Use hashtags like #NoBanNoWall, #IWelcome, and #Amnesty. Send photos to your Field Organizer after you're home.

## **15. What if a protest gets violent?**

Most protests will be safe, and you'll have the chance to raise your voice for human rights with others while feeling secure. Police have an obligation to facilitate peaceful protest, so they may be present, but are supposed to be there for protection.

The best course of action is to be prepared. Even before you get to the protest site, always make sure that you are aware of your surroundings, try to stay on the outside and ensure that you are able to identify an exit route at all times. If there is any violence, your job is to keep safe



and leave immediately. Remain calm, collected and cool headed. For more support on how to deal with potential violence at protests reach out to: [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org).

**16. Someone I am protesting with has been tear gassed, violently attacked, or has a medical emergency? What do I do in these situations?**

Even before heading out to a protest you want to prepare yourself and your team as best as you can. Refer to the protest safety documents in the first item of this FAQ. In preparation make sure to gather any medical information that you should know going into a protest environment. For example, if someone needs to have an EpiPen in the event of an allergic reaction they need to share that with you.

In the event that they are injured, you immediately need to get that person safely outside of the main protest area. If that is not possible, firmly tell the people around you to make space for that person.

Once you have taken the person to a safe location, stay with your friend and clearly and directly task someone with calling 911 or finding a nearby Emergency Medical Technician. In this situation don't ask, tell. For example "I need you to bring the EMT over here now. Call 911 and tell them to come to XX street and XX avenue. We have someone with XX injuries"

Your primary focus should be getting your friend to safe area and seeking out medical treatment. If possible document any injuries once you are in a safe location and medical treatment is on the way.

If you cannot find a EMT or your phone isn't able to contact them, locate a Street Medic.

Most actions will have "Street Medics" who are trained in dealing with protest related injuries. Find a street medic (they will have a red cross either taped on their back or on their bag) and inform the of exactly what happened.

Your job is to find medical attention, remain with your friend and keep them calm and safe until support arrives.

**17. I just organized a really powerful protest, what do I do now?**

Congrats on your successful protest! We would love to hear about it. Please send us your after-action report with what you did, where you were, who you were with, 1-2 photos, and anything you want to share about the impact of the event on you, your community, or the issue to [trumpwatch@aiusa.org](mailto:trumpwatch@aiusa.org).