

Amnesty USA Group #37

November 2024 Meeting Agenda

November 17, 2024 | 2:00pm-4:00pm

Meeting Info

IN-PERSON

First Congregational Church
500 SE 8th Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55414

ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84898872899?pwd=elc4eWdEZVI2dFIWb2NZTVN4RzUzZz09>

Meeting ID: 848 9887 2899
Passcode: 680930

Regular Meeting

Introductions

Welcome new members!

Native Land Co-existence Statement

Built on the seized state of indigenous peoples, Mni-Sota is built up over the territory of the Anishinaabeg and Dakota people, and we honor them as custodians past and present. We acknowledge the deep inequality in power relationships between indigenous interests and other planning bodies. We recognize indigenous interests and their determination over land upon which our homesteads, cities and suburbs have

been built. Under these conditions, we defend treaties and support the sovereignty of tribal nations and their citizens.

<https://twincitiesamnesty.org>

Letter Action!

News/Events

UPDATE Crisis Response: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Congress is back in session and it's an all hands on deck moment!

Amnesty International USA Urges Senators to Vote YES to Block Weapons Sales to the Israeli Government. Recently, Senator Bernie Sanders introduced Joint Resolutions of Disapproval in the Senate that would block the sale of over \$20 billion in weapons to the Israeli military based on human rights and humanitarian concerns. The bills will be coming to the Senate floor soon, and we have LIMITED time to get our senators to help pass them!

Take Action: Contact your two Senators and urge them to cosponsor and vote YES on the Joint Resolutions of Disapproval regarding weapons sales to the Israeli government (S.J.Res.111, 112, 113, 114, 115, and 116)

Have your local group take and repeat the actions listed below to help protect civilians and uphold human rights:

1. **Sign the online petition:** to your two Senators [here](#)
2. **Send a comment to your two Senators offices:** look them up [here](#)
3. **Call the offices:** of your [two Senators](#): You can use this [script](#).
4. **Call your Senator to:** Urge them to co-sponsor and vote in YES on the Joint Resolutions of Disapproval recently introduced by Senator Sanders, Welch, and Merkley regarding certain arms sales to the Israeli government. Take action [here](#).
5. **In-District Drop Off:** Take [Amnesty's asks and a summary of Amnesty's research findings](#) and drop it off at your representatives' in-district offices. [Use this tool to call ahead](#) to ensure you will be able to drop off the materials, as some offices still have added precaution in place post-Covid. If you complete a drop-off, please let us know at amnestyusa.org/debrief.
6. **Submit a letter:** to the editor (LTE) to your local newspaper calling on your Senators to co-sponsor and vote YES on the Joint Resolutions of Disapproval recently introduced by Senators Sanders, Welch and Merkley seeking to block certain arms sales to the Government of Israel. Here is an [easy guide](#) you can follow!
7. **Check out our IOPT member toolkit:** for the latest updates and more information on how you can take action

8. **Host a #NoWeaponsforWarCrimes Power Hour:** Bring your community together to make phone calls to the White House and your representatives calling for a suspension of weapons transfers to Israel and Amnesty's other demands. You can use [AIUSA's IOPT Ceasefire Power Hour Guide](#) that includes phone numbers that you can use to get connected to the White House and your representatives' offices, and scripts to use. AIUSA will also subsidize the costs of food and beverages at these events. ([RSVP and request funds here](#)).
9. **Call the White House comment line to urge President Biden to:**
 - Immediately suspend weapons transfers to Israel
 - Facilitate an immediate and permanent ceasefire
 - Demand unimpeded humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip
 - Restore funding to UNRWA as a vital lifeline to Palestinians

Call: (202) 456-1111. The phone line is open Tues-Thurs from 11 am to 3 pm EST

Have Questions? The IOPT Country Specialists host a weekly space exclusively for members to discuss, ask questions, and get updates regarding the ongoing crisis in Gaza. We'll be meeting every Wednesday at 7.30 PM EST. Connect, learn, and engage with fellow members as we navigate this complex issue together. email Alicia Koutsoulis akoutsoulis@aiusacs.org, to be added to the calendar invite. Use this updated link to [join the meeting](#).

UPDATE Human Rights Blueprint for the U.S. Border

President-elect Trump continues to double down on his damaging rhetoric that aims to dehumanize and criminalize people seeking safety. And the consequences are deadly - [deaths at the border](#) are skyrocketing, and abuses, [particularly in Texas, continue](#) without accountability. And new reporting on immigration polling numbers, show that the uptick in anti-immigrant public opinion is [one of the most dramatic shifts in the history of U.S. public opinion](#).

Just as September was coming to a close, [the Biden Administration issued new rules](#) to make the asylum ban permanent, and to ensure that the current border shutdown will be even harder to lift. While, on the campaign trail, both candidates continue to double down on their damaging rhetoric that aims to dehumanize and criminalize people seeking safety. And the consequences are deadly - [deaths at the border](#) are skyrocketing, and abuses, [particularly in Texas, continue](#) without accountability. And new reporting on immigration polling numbers, show that the uptick in anti-immigrant public opinion is [one of the most dramatic shifts in the history of U.S. public opinion](#). This is why our work to share and uplift the Human Rights Blueprint for the Border is so important right now. Amidst the cruelty, it is critical for all of us to speak out to defend the rights of refugees and migrants and show that there are REAL solutions to the issues at the border that don't rely on human rights violations.

There is a better way to guard the safety and dignity of all our communities. As we approach the election **have your local group take action by:**

- **Reading the [blueprint](#):** It can be used as a guidepost to have hard conversations in your community.

- **Sharing the blueprint:** Help us to gather [signatures](#) and [organizational endorsements](#) from local, state, and national partners to show the strength of our movement. As you share the Blueprint, encourage individuals and organizations to sign on to show support.
- **Getting on socials:** Stay tuned for a full social toolkit on the Blueprint, and in the meantime, pay attention to AIUSA's posts on X and Instagram and share our content like [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#).
- **Submitting a letter to the editor:** Introducing a new way for you to support the Blueprint in your local community- submit a Letter to the Editor (LTE) to your local newspaper! [Here is an easy guide](#) for you to follow!

Spotlight: United for Sudan: Demand the Biden Administration Take Action

After months of demands by activists President Biden finally [spoke](#) out on Sudan and said "The RSF must stop their assault that is disproportionately harming Sudanese civilians. The SAF must stop indiscriminate bombings that are destroying civilian lives and infrastructure". Meanwhile the UN Security Council extended the Sudan arms embargo on Darfur but did not expand it to cover all of Sudan. While these are positive developments and have been an Amnesty USA demands there is still work to be done. The situation in El Fasher remains dire with reports of violations emerging daily. Famine has been declared in parts of Sudan and the unhindered flow of arms into the country continues to harm civilians. While Biden has spoken out on Sudan he must now show those arming the belligerents that there will be consequences if they do not stop. While the arms embargo has been renewed - it must be enforced to have any impact.

We need your local group to take action by [completing and repeating](#) the actions below:

1. Contacting your Member of Congress, especially your Senators, and deliver the following message linked [here](#).

2. Calling the White House comment line to urge President Biden to:

- Enforce the existing United Nations Arms Embargo on Darfur.
- Work to expand the arms embargo to cover all of Sudan
- Pressure U.S. allies not to send weapons to Sudan
- Demand unimpeded humanitarian access to Sudan

CALL: (202) 456-1111. The phone line is open Tuesday-Thursday from 11 am to 3 pm EST

3. Taking the actions listed [here](#) to encourage the Biden Administration to take concrete steps to protect civilians

Interested in having AIUSA's Sudan Country Specialist Kim Searcy speak with your group?

Check out our [request a speaker form](#). He is based in Chicago and also willing to meet with groups virtually through zoom.

Monthly Membership Call

When: Nov 20, 2024 from 07:30 PM to 08:30 PM (CT)

Topic: AIUSA Stocktaking Findings + First 100 Days campaign

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://amnestyusa-org.zoom.us/joining/register/tZUvd-6srz8tEtwzVjp4shdLOzTAfeXFryyf>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Tell President Biden: Close Guantánamo

The military detention facility at Guantánamo Bay is a glaring, longstanding stain on the human rights record of the United States. Today, it continues to hold 30 Muslim men, most without facing charges or a trial. Many, like Toffiq al-Bihani, were tortured by the U.S. government. And Toffiq, along with 16 other detainees, has been cleared for transfer to other countries, yet he remains behind bars without charge or trial.

President Biden has a critical window of opportunity to transfer the cleared detainees and close the detention center before the end of his term.

Have your local group take action by:

- Signing and sharing our [petition](#) telling President Biden to close Guantánamo

Tell the U.S. Government: Help Civilians Harmed By U.S. Lethal Strikes

The U.S. Government claims it's keeping Americans safe by using drones, air strikes and Special Forces operations to kill people it calls "militants" or "terrorists" around the world. In reality, those strikes have killed thousands of civilians, usually without explanation or any effort to compensate survivors or their families for their devastating losses.

Congress has specifically authorized millions of dollars to assist civilian survivors of U.S. lethal actions, but year after year, the Department of Defense doesn't use that funding. Tell Secretary of Defense Austin to help civilian survivors still suffering from losing their loved ones and being injured by US lethal strikes:

Have your local group take action by:

- Signing and sharing our [petition](#) telling the U.S. military to help civilians harmed by U.S. lethal strikes

Good News!

The Arizona for Abortion Access Act

Arizona voters guarantee the right to abortion in the state constitution

<https://apnews.com/article/arizona-election-abortion-4c73ce02932bdccb0ccdc6be94babfd2>



Secured a decisive majority at the ballot box.

- 👊 Knocked on 1.7 million doors alongside our partners to engage voters.
- ✍️ Collected 823,685 voter signatures, marking the largest support for any citizens' initiative in Arizona's history.
- ☎️ Made 40,000 calls reminding voters about abortion access on the ballot.
- 📮 Sent 3,589 personal postcards directly to Arizona voters, encouraging them to vote YES on Prop 139.
- 💬 Elevated the voices of over 40 storytellers to share their experiences and connect with voters.

This victory in Arizona reflects a powerful national trend: in seven out of ten states where abortion was on the ballot, voters chose to protect or expand abortion rights.

MMIW

Group 37 Funds

Funded Programs

Makoce Ikikcupi, A Project of Reparative Justice - \$2,000
Death Penalty Action - \$2,000
AI Jamboree - \$2,000
Close Guantanamo - \$1,000

Pending Requests

AI Jamboree

Submitted by Aaron Tovo July 13, 2024

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YclhLuEooBxw3FR4t6N1t-N4zgBJPME3Buy80uy5XgY/e/dit?usp=sharing>

Aaron has asked for approval of this item

Close Guantanamo

Submitted by Wilbur Ince - October 04, 2024

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p0CrVkdal4G2C3A9TKR9iCbt5DwsdqIxBKACNJVWQqRU/edit>

Funding - \$500 earmarked for Human Rights in Gaza

We have received a check that is marked for work on Human Rights in Gaza.

Options:

- Use for movie event in March
- Send on to AIUSA

Funding - \$50 earmarked for Gun Control

Options:

- Can we send to Group 113 in Chicago to use in their active EGV campaign?

Casket Cinema Movie Screening

In March 2025, our group will be participating in a movie screening at Casket Cinema hosted by Wilbur Ince and Mark Wojahn (<https://casketcinema.com>) . We are looking for the right movie, and have a list to review:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x9v8P8mGuFKSk8wLufwmic9uD28jcBXrtLWDk7bgJ8Q/edit?tab=t.0>

Please take a look through the list and watch and post your recommendations. Mark and Wilbur really like Yours Truly, and this movie is about an Amnesty action.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOGQBZP5OpU>

Let Wilbur know if you are interested!

IAR Casefile

Morocco

Ken Mayers - wants to do a briefing with us on our case and our case in general. September or earlier

Guatemala

Letter Action

Tabling

Nothing scheduled at this time

Close Guantanamo

Demonstration

November 6th - Virtual - write-in event - poorly attended

Results | 2 calls | 7 contact forms | 1 letter

<https://www.andyworthington.co.uk/2024/11/09/photos-and-report-dismay-and-determination-at-the-global-vigils-for-guantanamos-closure-on-november-6-2024/>

December 4th

For our December event I have created another virtual event. Should we have an on-line event instead?

<https://twincitiesamnesty.org/event/2024-12-04/guantanamo-vigil-december-2024-virtual-call>

Banner

I have reached out to a few art professors looking for graffiti artists, but no leads so far.

Biden Petition To Close Guantanamo

<https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/96987/action/1>

Death Penalty

AI USA Website

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/issues/death-penalty/>

Iran - Mohammad Reza Azizi

YOUTH ARRESTED AT 17 AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

Mohammad Reza Azizi, 21, is at risk of imminent execution in relation to a crime that took place when he was just 17 years old, in violation of international law prohibiting the use of the death penalty against children. His trial was grossly unfair; the court relied on his “confessions” obtained during interrogations without a lawyer present to convict him. Iranian authorities have previously scheduled his execution at least twice, including on October 21, 2024. While his execution was halted following public outcries, he remains under sentence of death and at risk of execution.

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-youth-arrested-at-17-at-risk-of-imminent-execution-iran-93-24/>

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/UA-93.24-Iran.pdf>

Alabama - Carey Grayson

ALABAMA'S SIXTH EXECUTION OF THE YEAR IS SET

Alabama has scheduled Carey Grayson to be executed on November 21, 2024. In 1996, he became the last of four young males to be convicted of a 1994 murder. At the four separate trials, the prosecutor used mutually incompatible theories, claiming each defendant was the most culpable. In 2004, Alabama told the US Supreme Court that Carey Grayson was not the most culpable. His is the sole death sentence to survive on appeal. He was 19 at the time of the crime, emerging from a childhood marked by abuse, neglect, and bipolar disorder. We urge the Governor to commute his sentence.

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-alabamas-sixth-execution-of-the-year-is-set-usa-96-24/>

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/UA-96.24-USA.pdf>

Carey Grayson is scheduled to be killed on Thursday using Alabama's Gas Suffocation method of killing prisoners. We're delivering petitions at 12pm CT on MONDAY, Nov 18, 2024.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/stop-the-execution-of-carey-grayson-in-alabama/>

Idaho - Tom Creech

Execution halted for 2nd time

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Eugene_Creech

Execution halted while they deal with legal challenges.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/stop-the-execution-of-thomas-creech-in-idaho>

Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Commute the Row Petition

<https://commutetherow.com/>

Texas - Robert Robertson

Texas Supreme Court has denied the motion by Texas legislators to halt the execution.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2024/11/12/texas-robert-roberston-separation-of-powers-subpoena/>

Indiana - Joseph Corcoran

December 18 execution date set

First execution in Indiana since 2009

Corcoran suffers from paranoid Schizophrenia

Questions about his competency to stand trial

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/stop-the-execution-of-corcoran-in-indiana/>

Philippines

Lobbying

Virtual meetings to discuss Senate Joint Resolutions of Disapproval of sale of arms to Israel (S.J.Res. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, and 116).

Senator Smith - 11/15 visit

Senator Klobuchar - 11/17

Monday at 11:30 CT

Zoom <https://umn.zoom.us/j/93466967540>

Call in • +1 651 372 8299

Ask Paul for email with one-page handout

Guest Speaker - No speaker