

ESSENTIAL KIT  
FOR CHANGEMAKERS

TERM 1, 2019

Amnesty International Australia  
[www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au)

# Start Something

**GLOBAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS**



**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**TERM 1 2019: GLOBAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS**

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## Never miss an issue

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Cover: Gulzar Duishenova a disability rights advocate in Kyrgyzstan. ©

Amnesty International is an independent, global movement that campaigns courageously for human rights for everyone. We use our passion and commitment to bring torturers to justice, change oppressive laws and free people imprisoned just for voicing their opinion. We campaign, conduct research and raise money for our work. Our active members, such as school action groups, play a vital role in achieving our aims through writing letters, sending online actions, organising creative awareness-raising activities and fundraising in their communities.

Amnesty International acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which our offices are situated. We thank the elders past and present for their continued custodianship. This always has been and always will be Aboriginal land.

## Note from Naomi

Hi, I'm Naomi! Welcome to Start Something – the essential kit for changemakers!

*Start Something* is Amnesty's free e-magazine for students and teachers, packed with creative lessons and ideas to get students pumped about human rights.

If you've signed up for *Start Something* (hint – go to [amnesty.org.au/schools](http://amnesty.org.au/schools)), we'll send you an email at the start of each term with our latest issue.

Each term we'll explore a different human rights issue. You'll get all the background info you need, plus some creative ideas to take action and be a changemaker for human rights in your school and community.

We're kicking off 2019 with a look at three women standing up for freedom of expression, the rights of people with disabilities, and the rights of Indigenous peoples to live on their ancestral lands. You'll learn about their stories, what motivates them and how you can stand with them.

Another way to get your school involved with Amnesty is through our Schools Network Outreach Team, fondly known as SNOTs. Our team of dedicated SNOT volunteers help students and teachers with:

- School visits – delivering presentations and workshops about Amnesty and human rights.
- Group support – helping students and teachers start and grow Amnesty action groups at their school.
- Resources – providing schools, students and groups with up-to-date campaign information, lesson plans and suggested activities.

To get involved in our Schools Network Outreach Program, head to [amnesty.org.au/schools](http://amnesty.org.au/schools) and fill in the online form.

I hope you had a great summer break and got lots of rest – because we have lots of work to do in 2019. I can't wait to work with you all.

Cheers  
**Naomi**

National Youth Coordinator  
Amnesty International Australia

PS. Love *Start Something*? Have suggestions for next issue? Let me know at [youth@amnesty.org.au](mailto:youth@amnesty.org.au)



## Good news

### WOMEN RISE UP

Female activists dominated the biggest human rights headlines in 2018:

- In India and South Africa, thousands took to the streets to protest horrific rates of sexual violence.
- In Saudi Arabia and Iran respectively, women activists risked arrest to resist the driving ban and forced *hijab* (veiling).
- In Argentina, Ireland and Poland, demonstrators rallied in vast numbers to demand an end to oppressive abortion laws.
- In the USA, Europe and Japan, millions joined the second #MeToo women's march to demand an end to sexism, violence and abuse against women.

Women activists have risked their lives and freedoms to bring to light human rights injustices. They include Ahed Tamimi, a Palestinian teenager who was unjustly imprisoned for daring to stand up for her people; and Loujain al-Hathloul, Iman al-Nafjan and Aziza al-Yousef, three activists who are now detained in Saudi Arabia for campaigning on women's rights.

Amnesty International is urging governments to take action to ensure that women's rights are upheld – this includes not only commitments to international standards, but changes to harmful national laws and proactive measures to empower women and protect their rights.



International Women's Day in Mexico City, March 2017. © Sergio Ortiz/A



Me Nam and her family arriving in Houston, Texas after being released from jail in Vietnam. 17 October 2018 © AI

### AUSTRALIA: GROWING SUPPORT FOR REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Since early 2018, Amnesty supporters have been calling for the Australian Government to expand its existing community sponsorship program for refugees, which would allow community groups to assist with a refugee's settlement in Australia. As of writing, 25 local councils and more than 50 community leaders have called for the Federal Government to expand and improve refugee sponsorship.

### VIETNAMESE BLOGGER RELEASED

In October the Vietnamese authorities released from prison a prominent Vietnamese blogger Me Nam (Mother Mushroom), on the condition that she leaves the country. The mother of two had been arrested in 2016 and sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of "conducting propaganda" against the state.

More than 100 peaceful human rights defenders and activists have been imprisoned in Vietnam just for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

### 20TH US STATE ABOLISHES THE DEATH PENALTY

The Supreme Court in Washington State, US, has ruled to abolish the use of the death penalty. The court declared its use unconstitutional as it had been used in an arbitrary and racially biased manner. The decision makes Washington the 20th US state to abolish the death penalty.



Members of Amnesty's Refugee Advisory Group at an forum discussing refugee sponsorship in Sydney. December 2018. © AI



Amnesty activists hold a visual stunt to protest the use of the death penalty. © AI

# What are human rights?

It's a big question, but someone has to ask it. We asked prominent activists about the essence of human rights. Here's what they said...



Fred Bauma. © Amnesty International

## FRED BAUMA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

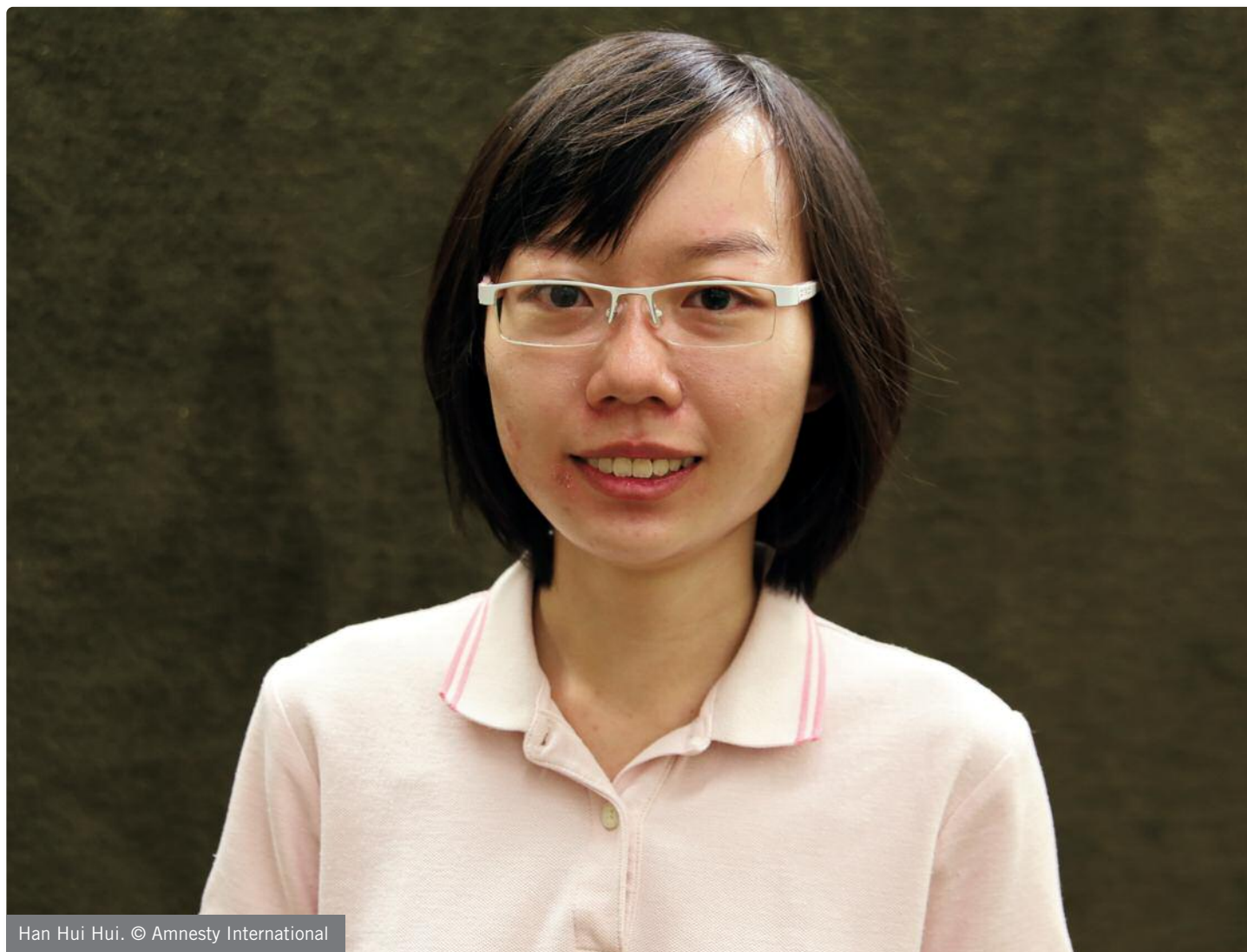
Fred Bauma is a leader of the social justice, human rights and pro-democracy youth group LUCHA, which advocates for change in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was arrested in March 2015 and spent 18 months in prison and could have faced the death penalty. Following international pressure from organisations like Amnesty International, Fred was released in 2016.

“Human rights, for me, are simple. It’s the things that make you feel human and make you consider someone else to be as human as you. It’s not in the laws or in the UN, it’s in love, compassion and empathy.

Growing up, I saw a lot of violence in my country. People were suffering and there was a feeling of powerlessness. A lot of people were displaced, including myself. I didn’t want to see anybody else in the same situation, and I knew something had to change. That’s why I became a human rights activist.

The first challenge I had to overcome was state violence and repression. I experience it every day and so does my family. After I was arrested, I was labelled a risk. Apart from my family and friends, people didn’t want to acknowledge that they knew me – they looked at me in a different way. My family and friends were so courageous to stand up for me, even though it affected the way they were seen too.

It makes me proud to see that my fellow people citizens are starting to speak more freely, without fear. The pressure continues but at least they are aware of the power we hold. For me, bringing power back to the people will be the most important achievement.”



Han Hui Hui. © Amnesty International

## HAN HUI HUI, SINGAPORE

Han Hui Hui in Singapore uses her blog and social media to highlight shortcomings in social services, as well as raise public awareness of human rights violations in her country. She has been physically assaulted and harassed, and has been jailed and held in solitary confinement just for speaking out.

“As a Singaporean, I believe human rights are concrete things. The ability to have adequate housing for families to stay in. Adequate healthcare so people are not afraid to fall ill and die. And proper pensions so everyone can enjoy their golden age once they’re retired.

I don’t consider myself a human right defender. I am just an ordinary Singapore citizen, who wants to blog about my life and the education system in my country. But blogging about the education system in Singapore has got me into trouble.

In 2013, the Singapore Government sent me a letter accusing me of defamation. I was very scared. I didn’t have the resources to fight back against the government. I started looking beyond borders, and that’s when I realised there was something called freedom of speech and that I had the right to question the government.

I continued blogging, but I faced a lot of abuse. People questioned whether I was a girl. They think girls should just focus on clothes and make-up – they think we don’t have the brains to blog, too.

I still face harassment. I have been banned from organising an event in Singapore. I’ve spent time in solitary confinement and I’ve also faced deportation. In the end, I am just a curious person who wants to raise awareness.”

## GOOD TO KNOW

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a global document outlining 30 rules, or Articles, for ensuring every person’s rights are respected. The United Nations created the UDHR in 1948 after the horrific events of World War II.

The Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples outlines the additional standards and rights needed to ensure the wellbeing of the world’s Indigenous Peoples and cultures.

Human Rights Day on 10 December commemorates when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, shortly after the founding of the United Nations. People celebrate Human Rights Day in different ways all over the world.

## WATCH

In this four-minute video 30 people recite a human right that they have a personal connection with – and which belong to each and every one of us: [bit.ly/Udhr-AIA](https://bit.ly/Udhr-AIA)

# The right to freedom from discrimination

Discrimination strikes at the very heart of being human. It is treating someone differently simply because of who they are or what they believe, their race, ethnicity, nationality, class, religion, belief, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, health or other status.

At the heart of all forms of discrimination is prejudice based on concepts of identity, and the need to identify with a certain group. This can lead to ignorance and even hate. When people face these abuses, their human dignity is denied. They may also not be able to enjoy other rights, such as the right to work, receive health care or get an education.

Sometimes people are discriminated against directly for who and what they are, for example, the refusal by the police to provide protection to LGBTI activists during public gatherings. Sometimes it happens indirectly and without any intentions. An example of this is employers asking for a high level of proficiency in a native language when the tasks involved do not actually require it.

Typically, discrimination affects some of the most vulnerable members of society who are trapped in particularly severe cycles of exclusion and deprivation. In this context, different forms of discrimination intersect and overlap, which can intensify their effects on an individual's experience. For example, a woman who is disabled can experience both gender discrimination and disability discrimination.

Some governments reinforce their power and the status quo by openly justifying discrimination in the name of "morality", religion or ideology. It can be cemented in national law – such as by restricting women's freedom – despite breaching international law. Certain groups can even be viewed by the authorities as more likely to be criminal simply for who they are, such as being poor, Indigenous or black.

## MEET GULZAR DUISHENOVA, KYRGYZSTAN

Gulzar Duisheva is a fighter. In 2002, she lost movement in her legs after a car accident involving a drunk driver. The next year, her husband died suddenly, and she became the sole carer for her two young children. But she never let it defeat her.

Years later, she met other people living with disabilities in the capital city of Bishkek. She realised they faced common problems, including struggling to find jobs because work places aren't adapted for wheelchairs, or relying on others to lift them onto buses – an embarrassing experience.

She's made it her life's mission to ensure people with disabilities can live with dignity and move around freely. She's met officials, organised training for bus drivers and pushed for action on social media.

But she continues to face barriers. She needs help to get down the stairs to her front door. Her road is pot-holed and bumpy, so she can't use her wheelchair. She faces daily discrimination in a society where women aren't meant to speak out and people with disabilities are seen as "invalids" with an incurable disease.



**Universal Declaration of Human Rights,** Article 2 entitles every person freedom from being treated differently to others because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, religion, sexuality, gender, economic status, political affiliation, ableness, age, or any other status.



Disability rights campaigner Gulzar Duisheva at her home in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. August 2018 © Svetlana Zelenskaya/AI



## TEACHING ACTIVITY

## Three truths, one lie

Run the following workshop with your class or action group.

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:** blank paper, pens, whiteboard

1. Give each student a blank piece of paper and ask them to write their name and four pieces of information about themselves on the paper. Explain that three pieces of information should be fact and one should be a lie. For example, "Alfonse likes singing, loves ice cream, plays football and baseball". **3 MINUTES**
2. Students then circulate with their sheets of paper. They meet in pairs and show each other the four pieces of information and try to guess which of the "facts" is a lie. Ask them to meet another person and repeat. **5 MINUTES**
3. The third time, get students to find one last partner with whom they should – instead of sharing their "facts" – discuss the following questions:
  - Was it easy to find the lie?
  - How did you go about identifying or guessing which information was a fact and which was a lie?
  - Did you make assumptions about the person? What kind of assumptions?
  - Were your assumptions always correct? **5 MINUTES**
4. Regroup and ask students to share what they discussed in pairs. Write on a whiteboard any assumptions that students made about each other in order to identify what was fact or lie. **5 MINUTES**
5. Reflect with the students on the following to discuss whether the assumptions we make about people are always correct.
  - How people usually make assumptions about others based only on what they see – like a person's gender, their skin colour, religion, where they come from, or whether they have a disability.
  - Many times, assumptions about certain groups come from what we have learned or heard from the media, family and friends.
  - It is important to recognise that we make assumptions about people, often based on learned stereotypes and prejudices, which can often be unconscious.
  - It is difficult to know people just by looking at them or by associating them with a group. **7 MINUTES**

## ACTIVISM ACTIVITY

## Create change with Gulzar

Gulzar needs your voice to help create change for people with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan. There are two ways you can support Gulzar.

### 1. Write to the Speaker of Kyrgyzstan's parliament

Call on the Speaker of Kyrgyzstan's parliament to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Use the following guidelines to help write your letter:

- Tell him something about yourself.
- Tell him that you support Gulzar and other activists as they fight for the rights of people with disabilities.
- Tell him that the parliament must ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to help address discrimination and improve access to health, buildings, jobs and transport.

#### Send your letter to:

Speaker of Parliament Chui Prospekti  
c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked Bag 23, Broadway, NSW 2007

### 2. Send Gulzar a message of support

Send a letter of solidarity and support directly to Gulzar to let her know you're with her. When writing your letter, think about what Gulzar might want to hear so that she knows there are people around the world who stand by her.

#### Send your letter to:

Gulzar Duishenova  
c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked Bag 23, Broadway, NSW 2007



# Indigenous Peoples' land rights

Around the world there are more than 5,000 different Indigenous Peoples, speaking more than 4,000 languages. They have different customs and cultures, but they often share some difficult realities: removal of their lands, denial of their culture, physical attacks and being treated as second-class citizens. Indigenous Peoples often face discrimination in countries' legal systems. This leaves them at further risk of violence and abuse.

The lands on which Indigenous Peoples live are often rich in resources and have been taken over, sold, leased or simply plundered and polluted by governments and private companies. Many people have been uprooted from their land through discriminatory government policies or armed conflict. Indigenous Peoples often share a key value – the close association between identity, their way of life and their land. They act as “guardians” or “custodians” of the land for the next generation. Losing it may mean a loss of identity.

Some people are standing up against powerful authorities and businesses that want to make money from their lands. Indigenous Peoples who speak out sometimes face intimidation and violence – even murder – when they seek to defend their communities and their lands.

At the international level, Indigenous Peoples have made their voices heard and effectively lobbied governments. As a result, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. Governments must implement laws and policies that bring the Declaration to life, particularly around:

- Ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have a say in decisions that affect them
- Maintaining their distinct cultural identities
- Living free from discrimination and the threat of genocide
- Having secure access to the lands and resources essential to their wellbeing and ways of life.

## MEET NONHLE MBUTHUMA, SOUTH AFRICA

Nonhle Mbuthuma is leading the fight for her community against a mining company which wants to mine titanium on their ancestral land. “When you take my land, you take my identity,” she says. But she’s being harassed just for defending their rights.

Nonhle is part of the Amadiba traditional community, an Indigenous People with communal rights to land on South Africa’s Eastern Cape. Around 5,000 people may be forcibly evicted if the company is allowed to mine the land. They could lose their homes, livelihoods and whole way of being.

Nonhle founded the Amadiba Crisis Committee to unite people across five villages to push back. Since then, she has been continually intimidated and threatened and even survived an attempt to kill her. Another community leader was shot dead in 2016 and Nonhle was next on the ‘hit list’. She believes the threats are an attempt to silence her and force her off her land.

But she’s determined to resist. As she says: “This land was my grandmother’s, who inherited it from her grandparents. What am I going to leave for my children? Mining is not an option.”



Article 26 of the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** recognises Indigenous Peoples’ right to “own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use.”



Nonhle Mbuthuma opposes the plans to mine for titanium in the Xolobeni area in Eastern Cape, South Africa. © AI



A community meeting organised by the Amadiba Crisis Committee in Xolobeni, Easter Cape, South Africa, August 2018. © AI



Nonhle's family home. Eastern Cape, South Africa © AI

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

# Forced evictions – what would you choose?

Run the following workshop with your class or action group.

**Time:** 55 minutes **Materials:** whiteboard

- Encourage everyone to use their imagination for this activity. Ask them to close their eyes, then guide them through the following prompts, providing enough time to reflect on each question:
  - Imagine in your head where you live, your community. What does it look like? What does it smell like? What do you hear?
  - Who lives in your neighbourhood? Picture your family. Think about your next-door neighbour. Now your other neighbours.
  - What do you like to do in your neighbourhood? Think of some of your favourite activities. What are some of your fondest memories there?
  - Ask everyone to open their eyes, keeping those images, sensations and memories in their mind. **10 MINUTES**
- Now explain the following situation: a company has made arrangements with the government, and they would like to have your community's land. They've found something very valuable under your home and your neighbours' homes! They will give you some money, but you have to leave your home and community, and you will not be able to return – it will not exist anymore.
  - Ask for a show of hands: Who would accept the offer? Who would not accept it? Discuss why or why not.
  - Ask those who refuse the offer to raise their hands again. Tell them that, actually, they don't have a choice. They simply must leave their homes, and the government is in agreement with this.
  - Ask: How does this make them feel? What would they do in response? Would they accept it? Would they resist being removed from their home and community? Why? Ask those who accepted the offer: What do they think of this situation? Is it fair? **10 MINUTES**
- Explain to students that this actually happens to many people from all over the world – especially to Indigenous Peoples. It is called “forced eviction”, and it is especially common in the mining industry. Share with them some information about Indigenous Peoples from the background information. **5 MINUTES**
- Now introduce them to a real individual fighting for land rights and against the forced eviction, Nonhle Mbuthuma. **5 MINUTES**
- Begin a discussion with students. You may ask:
  - Why is Nonhle resisting the opening of mines in her area? What is she worried about?
  - What is Nonhle's understanding of her relationship to her land?
  - Are you surprised that one company can uproot an entire community? Why or why not?
  - Are you surprised that Nonhle is being intimidated and her life threatened? Why or why not?
  - What other human rights are relevant for Nonhle's struggle and why? **15 MINUTES**
- For the last part of the activity, draw a line down the middle of the whiteboard. Write “Fears” on one side. Invite students to come up and write down the fears they think Nonhle would have in her situation. They can think back to their own feelings from the start activity. Now write “Strengths” on the other side of the line. Ask everyone to write down Nonhle's strengths: How is she persevering? How is she inspiring? **10 MINUTES**

## ACTIVISM ACTIVITY

# Protect Indigenous land rights in South Africa

Help Nonhle keep fighting for the right to live safely on her ancestral land in South Africa. There are two ways you can take action for Nonhle.

## 1. Write to the President of South Africa

Urge the South African President to protect Nonhle and investigate the intimidation and harassment she is experiencing today. Use the following guidelines to help write your letter:

- Tell him something about yourself.
- Tell him what shocks you about Nonhle's story. For example, that Nonhle is fighting for her community and their ancestral land.
- Urge him to protect Nonhle Mbuthuma and investigate the harassment and intimidation targeted at her today.

## Send your letter to:

President of the Republic of South Africa  
c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked Bag 23, Broadway, NSW 2007

## 2. Send Nonhle a message of support

You can send a letter of solidarity and support directly to Nonhle and her community, so they know there are people around the world who stand by them. You can express your solidarity, admiration or share a positive thought for the future.

## Send your letter to:

c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked Bag 23, Broadway, NSW 2007

# The right to freedom of expression

Freedom of expression is the right of every individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers.

Freedom of expression protects your right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely without government interference. This includes the right to express views through public protests or through written materials, media broadcasts and works of art. This right also protects your freedom to seek and receive information from other people.

Although we have the right to freedom of expression, it is not an unlimited right – sometimes governments have a duty to protect other people's rights or certain public interests which requires some expression to be prohibited. But the circumstances in which the authorities can restrict freedom of expression are very narrow and must be considered as exceptional rather than the norm.

Freedom of peaceful assembly is the right of people to come together in a public place for a common expressive purpose, such as for meetings, strikes, processions, rallies and sit-ins. The right to peaceful assembly means that someone can gather together with others peacefully without fear of being arrested or harassed by the police. In fact, the authorities have a positive duty to facilitate peaceful assemblies, so the police may be required to take special measures to ensure the safety of both the people assembling and the general public.

## MEET NAWAL BENAÏSSA, MOROCCO

Nawal Benaïssa is prepared to stand up for what she believes in. That's why she speaks out for social justice and better health care services in the Rif region of Morocco, where many people feel forgotten by their government.

She's been on peaceful protests and campaigned for change on social media. But every step of the way, she's been harassed by the Moroccan authorities in an attempt to silence her. They arrested and held her in custody four times in just four months, and demanded she close her popular Facebook profile which had 80,000 followers. Finally, in February 2018, Nawal was fined for "inciting to commit an offence". She's appealing the verdict, but the intimidation continues. She fled to another city to escape the constant surveillance.

Nawal's treatment is part of a major crackdown on peaceful protesters. Moroccan security forces have arrested hundreds of people, some just for expressing their support on Facebook. For Nawal, the solution is simple. She wants to be completely free to fight for a better future for her community and her children.



The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are enshrined in international human rights law, including in the **UDHR**, as well as many national legal systems.



Nawal Benaïssa, a rights activist in Morocco, has faced intimidation for exercising her right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. August 2018 © Abdellah Azizi



## TEACHING ACTIVITY

# Freedom of expression word cloud

Run the following workshop with your class or action group.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** whiteboard, sticky notes

1. Ask everyone to write down on sticky notes the ways in which they commonly express themselves. Examples could be “sharing selfies”, “writing poems” or “music”. **3 MINUTES**
2. Invite people to put their sticky notes on the whiteboard so everyone can see their responses. Give students a minute to look at the notes. **2 MINUTES**
3. Once the whiteboard is covered with notes, ask everyone why they express themselves in these ways? What does it enable them to do? Why is it important to them? **5 MINUTES**
4. Get together in pairs and discuss what would be the consequences if they were not allowed to express themselves in these ways any more? Would it have a big impact on their daily activities and their friendships? How would it make them feel? Would they be upset? Why? Or why not? **7 MINUTES**
5. Bring the whole group back together. Ask what came out of their discussions. What surprised them about the discussions? Explain that many people around the world cannot express themselves freely and that some people are even thrown into prison simply because they speak their minds. **3 MINUTES**

## ACTIVISM ACTIVITY

# Defend human rights in Morocco

Help Nawal stand up for the right to freedom of expression in Morocco. There are two ways you can take action for Nawal.

## 1. Write to the Moroccan Government

Call on the Head of Government to end the ongoing harassment of Nawal and other activists like her. Tips for your letter:

- Tell him something about yourself.
- Tell him what shocks you about Nawal's story. She is a peaceful protester and human rights defender who just wants a better life for people in her region.
- Urge him to halt the harassment of Nawal.

### Send your letter to:

Department of the Head of Government Palais  
Royal Touarga  
Rabat, Morocco  
c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked Bag 23, Broadway NSW 2007

## 2. Send a message to Nawal

Write a message of solidarity and support to Nawal and her family, so they know there are people around the world who stand by them.

### Send your letter to:

Nawal Benaissa  
c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked Bag 23, Broadway, NSW 2007