

Protecting Amnesty's independence

Amnesty International is an independent global movement of people defending human rights. Amnesty International Australia does not accept any money from governments or political parties and this allows us to maintain full independence from governments, political parties or ideologies, economic interests or religions.

By remaining impartial and independent, AI can critique all policies - regardless of which political party proposes them - on the basis of their compliance or not with human rights standards. It is vital that we are never perceived to be partial in any political direction, as this would undermine the significance of our criticism. By ensuring the accuracy of our public comments Amnesty maintains its credibility. This strengthens AI's standing within the community and with decision makers.

As Amnesty activists we have an obligation to keep party politics out of our work for Amnesty and we need to maintain the highest possible standards of accuracy in our public comments.

Social media

Social media is a great tool for informing and mobilising supporters, and engaging decision makers. Just as we do for joint actions and events, we need to remember this at all times when representing Amnesty online: ours is a movement of people that draws strength from our independence and we all have a role in ensuring we maintain this.

A few points to remember if you manage a social media account for your Amnesty group:

- Let the world know you're a team of Amnesty activists. Make it clear that your twitter account or facebook page is run by volunteers and activists. Here's an example of what that looks like:

Run by a dedicated team of volunteers and activists, this is the twitter account of the Camelot Amnesty Group. Email king.arthur@amnesty.org.au to get involved. Re-tweet ≠ endorsement.

- Be careful not to share information from unreliable sources as facts.
- The same rules about not endorsing political parties exist online too - so please don't share information from political parties or invitations to political party events via your Amnesty social media accounts.
- When you engage with public authorities or decision makers make sure you use polite language and check facts.

When in doubt, speak to your fellow activists, contact your community organiser or email activism@amnesty.org.au

Joint actions

Getting involved in joint actions with other groups in our communities is vital if we want to continue to grow and develop a strong global human rights movement.

When we attend rallies or work with other groups to organise events it's important to remember that Amnesty International's independence is a vital part of our effectiveness.

When we're working with other groups in our communities it's important to remember:

- Other organisations may not share the same ethos as Amnesty International, they may have a clear party political agenda. It is very important that when you represent Amnesty that your collaboration in a particular event does not have the potential to infringe on Amnesty International's independence.
- This doesn't mean you don't engage with or attend events where representatives of political parties might be present, it means you need to exercise your judgement when engaging in activities that are likely to involve groups with a party political agenda.
- Having a range of organisations involved will help ensure that an activity is not seen as promoting political party views.
- A simple example might be to ensure Amnesty banners don't share a platform with those of political parties.
- Explain and outline Amnesty's independent position to activists from other organisations, and remind them that Amnesty does not endorse ANY political party's policies or attempt to influence the outcomes of elections. Try to ensure that the focus of discussion is on issues not politics.
- Remind other members of your group of the importance of maintaining Amnesty's independence and that we will only ever support non-violent protests and demonstrations.

Working with other groups in our community is an important aspect of building our human rights movement, but we understand that it is not always easy making a decision on whether or not to participate in an activity organised by other groups. If you're in doubt about any of this remember that you're not alone: speak to fellow activists, or the Community Organiser in your region or email activism@amnesty.org.au