



# LETTER-WRITING GUIDE

Here are a few simple rules for writing a letter with Amnesty International:

1. Use a reasoned and respectful tone. Yes, many human rights abuses are outrageous. But your aim is to be listened to. Assume your reader is open to reason and a respectfully-worded appeal.
2. Carefully follow the facts and instructions given by Amnesty International for each appeal. The “facts” help your reader identify the case about which you are writing. The "Recommended Actions" say what we want to see happen so that the situation will improve.
3. Use your personal voice. Our appeals gain strength when they are seen to be coming from many concerned individuals. Include a personal reference, for example: "As a mother of two children...", "As a student...." Express key points of the "Recommended Actions" through your own feelings and words.
4. Base your appeals on international law, not political opinions. Human rights are based on international laws, agreements and obligations. Effective letters are based on these obligations. Political judgments or jargon are not effective and can sometimes do harm.
5. Point to positive opportunities for change. Where possible, point to a country's traditions or ideals that support human rights. Look for opportunities to encourage further support for human rights.
6. Express your personal interest in the country. If relevant, include a brief reference to your personal experience with the country and its peoples, such as travel experience or studying the country's history.
7. Be brief. Most letters can easily fit on one side of a single page. Often a two- or three-sentence letter can be effective.