

Amnesty International

"BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN CURSE THE DARKNESS"

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

We are funded by members and people like you. We are independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion. No government is beyond scrutiny. No situation is beyond hope.

Few would have predicted when we started that torturers would become international outlaws. That most countries would abolish the death penalty. And seemingly untouchable dictators would be made to answer for their crimes.

Where it all began

In 1961, British lawyer Peter Benenson was outraged when two Portuguese students were jailed just for raising a toast to freedom. He wrote an article in The Observer newspaper and launched a campaign that provoked an incredible response. Reprinted in newspapers across the world, his call to action sparked the idea that people everywhere can unite in solidarity for justice and freedom.

This inspiring moment didn't just give birth to an extraordinary movement, it was the start of extraordinary social change.

"Only when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed, when the last torture chamber has been closed, when the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a reality for the world's people, will our work be done."

Peter Benenson, Amnesty International founder

...ing education to defending refugees and migrants' rights. We speak out for anyone and everyone whose freedom and dignity are under threat.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Together, we can use our influence – from advocating with world leaders to sharing the truth of what’s happening on the ground – to help stop repression around the world.

Ken Roth

Executive Director

Human Rights Watch was founded in 1978 as “Helsinki Watch,” when we began investigating rights abuses in countries that signed the Helsinki Accords, most notably those behind the Iron Curtain. Since then, our work has expanded to five continents. We investigated massacres and even genocides, along with government take-overs of media and the baseless arrests of activists and political opposition figures. At the same time, we expanded our work to address abuses against those likely to face discrimination, including women, LGBT people, and people with disabilities. When families victimized by war crimes found no justice at home, we championed international justice and international courts. While we rely on in-person interviews, our research methods have also changed with the times, and today we use satellite imagery to track the destruction of villages and city blocks, and we mine big data for patterns in arrest rates or the deportation of immigrants. Everything we do circles back to our commitment to justice, dignity, compassion, and equality.

What We Do:

Investigate: Our researchers work in the field in 100 some countries, uncovering facts that create an undeniable record of human rights abuses.

Expose: We tell the stories of what we found, sharing them with millions of social media and online followers each day. News media often report on our investigations, furthering our reach.

Change: We meet with governments, the United Nations, rebel groups, corporations, and others to see that policy is changed, laws are enforced, and justice is served.

Impact:

Human Rights Watch documents right abuses around the world with the ultimate goal of ending them and bringing the perpetrators to justice. Change doesn't come easily, and in some cases it can be painfully slow. And it rarely comes from our efforts alone, but rather from the combined efforts of numerous groups and activists. Progress can take many forms - laws are changed, investigations launched, international pressure is applied, perpetrators brought before courts - but each is a step forward in the pursuit of justice and promotion of human rights. Here we document developments that mark progress in the many issues we work on around the world