

Amnesty International Ireland CONSTITUTION

As adopted by the 1996 AC and last amended by the 2018 AC.

GLOSSARY

AC Annual Conference (formerly known as the AGM)

CAC Conference Agenda Committee

EGM Emergency General Meeting

Article 1: Name and Office

- (1) The organization is a Section of Amnesty International and shall be known as "Amnesty International Ireland (hereinafter referred to as "The Section").
- (2) The Section adopts the Statute of Amnesty International for the time being in force (hereinafter referred to as "the Statute") and any modification, re-enactment or amendment of the Statute duly passed by the International Council of Amnesty International.
- (3) The Secretariat of the Section shall be at Seán MacBride House, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2, or such other venue as may be decided by the National Board (from time to time).

Article 2: Objects

The objects of the Section shall be those of Amnesty International, as stated in the Statute.

Article 3: Methods

The Section shall operate in accordance with the methods stated in the Statute and with the working rules and guidelines of the International Council.

Article 4: External Relations

In pursuance of the objects and methods defined in Articles 2 and 3, the Section shall endeavour to maintain close relations with other sections throughout the world and particularly with the International Board and International Secretariat of Amnesty International and to send representatives to the International Council.

Article 5: Organization

- (1) The Section shall consist of individual members, Amnesty International groups and affiliated organizations.
- (2) Individual members who so wish may be organized into Amnesty International groups (hereinafter referred to as "groups") by the National Board of the Section on terms and conditions to be laid down from time to time by the National Board.

Article 6: Membership

The National Board may, upon receipt of an application and the appropriate annual subscription, grant membership in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution to persons and bodies supporting Amnesty International's objects and methods as follows:

- (a) (i) Individual residents of the State of Ireland aged 12 or over;
"ii) Irish citizens aged 12 or over resident outside the State of Ireland either temporarily or permanently
- (b) Groups – established in accordance with Article 5(2) – based in the state of Ireland;
- (c) Affiliated organisations located in the state of Ireland; and
- (d) AI support structures based in schools, colleges, youth, and community groups.

Article 7: Termination of Membership

- (1) Individual members, groups, affiliated organisations or school, college, youth, and community support structures may terminate their membership of the Section at any time by submitting their resignation in writing to the National Board. A group shall be deemed to be dissolved on the termination of its membership.
- (2) An individual member, group, affiliated organisation, or school, college, youth, or community structure whose

subscription is more than one year in arrears shall cease to be a member of the Section.

- (3) (a) In the event that an individual member, group, affiliated organisation, or school, college, youth, or community support structure fails to observe any of the provisions of this Constitution, the National Board may, by a two-thirds majority, vote to expel such individuals, groups, affiliated organisations or support structures.
(b) Where such a decision to expel or suspend membership is taken, the National Board shall inform the affected party in writing of the grounds for such expulsion or suspension and of their right to appeal against the decision at the next Annual Conference (AC) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Section.
(c) Where the affected party wishes to exercise this right of appeal, he/she/they shall give written notice of their intention to do so, such notice to reach the Section Secretariat not more than 21 days after the date of the notification of expulsion or suspension.
(d) Pending the outcome of such an appeal, the membership of the affected party shall be deemed to be in suspension.

Article 8: Subscriptions

- (1) The rates of subscription for individual members, groups, affiliated organisations, or school, college, youth, or community support structures shall be determined by the Annual Conference.
- (2) Membership fee for young people aged (12-25 yrs) in full-

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time education and/or training is set at €5.

- (3) Membership fee for refugee and asylum seekers shall be waived.
- (4) Annual subscriptions shall be renewable on January 1st each year or on such date as may be decided by the EC.

Article 9: Annual Conference (AC)

- (1) The directive authority for the conduct of the affairs of the Section shall be vested in the AC.
- (2) The Annual Conference shall be convened by the National Board and shall be held not more than 16 months after the preceding Annual Conference upon not less than 65 days notice to all individual members, groups, affiliated organisations and school, college, youth and community support structures. With the exception of school, college, youth, and community support structures, it shall be sufficient for notices to be given through the Section website, Newsletter and other publication as may be issued from the Section Secretariat to all members.
- (3) Attendance at the AC shall be open to all members of the Section and to nominees of affiliated organizations.
- (4) Voting entitlements for the election of the National Board shall be as follows:
 - (a) Each member shall have one vote – provided that she or he has been in continuous membership of the Section for at least six months before the final date for the receipt of ballot papers. Members who are employed by the Section at the closing date for the receipt of nominations for the election or at the time of the Conference shall not be entitled to vote. Members whose membership is in suspension shall not be entitled to vote.
 - (b) An affiliated organization of at least six months' standing shall

have one vote, exercised by an accredited nominee whose identity shall have been notified to the Section Secretariat not less than 14 days before the exercise of the vote, except that an affiliated organization whose membership is in suspension shall not be entitled to vote.

- (c) A school, college or youth group of at least six months standing shall have one vote and one additional vote for every 200 members of that group up to a maximum of four additional votes, each vote to be exercised by an accredited nominee whose identity shall have to be notified to the Section Secretariat not less than seven days before the exercise of the vote except that a structure whose membership is in suspension shall not be entitled to vote.

(d) The Treasurer's declaration shall be conclusive as to the eligibility of a member or affiliated organization under Article 9(4) (a) and (b) and (c) above.

(5) Voting entitlements at the AC for all matters other than the election of the National Board shall be as follows:

- (a) A member of at least six months' standing and present at the meeting shall have one vote, except that a member whose membership is in suspension shall not be entitled to vote.
- (b) An affiliated organization of at least six months' standing and represented at the meeting by an accredited nominee - whose identity shall have been notified to the Section Secretariat not less than 7 days before the meeting - shall have one vote, except that an affiliated organization whose membership is in suspension shall not be entitled to vote.
- (c) A school, college or youth support structure of at least six months standing shall have one vote and one additional vote for every 200 members of that group up to a maximum of four additional votes, each vote to be exercised by an accredited nominee whose identity shall

have been notified to the Section Secretariat not less than seven days before the exercise of the vote except that a structure whose membership is in suspension shall not be entitled to vote.

- (d) The Treasurer's declaration shall be conclusive as to the eligibility of an individual member, affiliated organisation or school or college support structure under Article 9(5) (a),(b) and (c) above.

(6) Persons who are not members of the Section may be invited by the National Board to attend and address the AC. Such persons may take part in the deliberations of the AC at the invitation of the Chairperson of the meeting but shall not be entitled to vote.

(7) The outgoing Chairperson of the Conference Agenda Committee (hereinafter referred to as the CAC) shall preside over the deliberations of the AC; or, in his or her absence, the outgoing Vice-Chairperson of the CAC shall preside. In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the CAC, the AC shall elect a Chairperson from amongst those voting members or voting accredited nominees present at the meeting, provided that he or she shall not be an outgoing member of the National Board.

(8) The AC shall:

(a) Firstly, consider and approve, amend or reject the report of the CAC on the order of debate for the AC;

(b) Consider and approve, amend or reject the Section annual report and certified accounts for the preceding year submitted by the National Board;

(c) Determine the rates of subscription for individual members, groups, affiliated organisations and school, college, youth, and community support structures; and review the implementation of the outline budget for the current year – making any necessary amendments;

(d) The Annual Conference shall consider and approve, amend or reject a draft strategic plan for the Section based on a four-year strategic planning cycle, a biennial draft operational plan, an annual report from

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the National Board and a high level outline budget for the following calendar year.

(e) Elect the incoming members of the National Board, three members of the CAC and any other committees as may be required;

(f) consider and approve, amend, remit or reject any motions duly proposed and seconded by voting members and/or voting nominees of affiliated organisations and/or school, college, youth, and community support structures as defined in accordance with Article 9(5), provided that such motions have been submitted in accordance with Articles 9(9) and/or 9(10).

(g) hear any appeals under Article 7(3) against suspension or expulsion from membership and make a decision on such appeals.

(h) appoint tellers to assist the Chairperson of the meeting in determining the number of votes cast on any vote other than by secret ballot, and scrutineers to supervise the distribution and counting of ballot papers in secret ballots, including elections for the National Board and any other committees as provided under Article 9 (8) (e);

(i) transact any other business.

(9) All motions for consideration by the Annual Conference under Article 9(8)(f) shall be received at the Section not less than 28 days before the Annual Conference. The text of all such motions and other documentation relating to the AC as then may be available, shall be posted on the Section website not less than 14 days before the meeting.

(10) Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 9(9), motions dealing with urgent matters not on the agenda may be duly proposed and seconded by voting members and/or voting nominees of affiliated organisations and/or school, college, youth, and community support structures, as defined under Article 9(5), provided that permission to do so has been obtained in the first instance

from the Conference Agenda Committee. An urgent matter is one so deemed by the Conference Agenda Committee to be a matter of vital importance arising in the interval between the last date for the receipt of motions specified under Article 9(9) and the commencement of the Annual Conference.

(11) The order of the debate at the AC shall be prepared by the CAC and approved by the AC.

(12) The AC shall make its decisions by simple majority of those present and voting except where otherwise provided for in this Constitution. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the meeting shall exercise the casting vote.

Article 10: Conference Agenda Committee

(1) The CAC shall consist of three members elected by the preceding AC, together with one member nominated by the National Board and the Section Directorate, ex-officio. The AC shall also elect two substitute members of the CAC - who shall fill any casual vacancies that may arise on the CAC between ACs. The CAC shall make its decision by simple majority of those members of the Committee present and voting. The quorum for the CAC shall be three. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the Committee shall exercise the casting vote.

(2) On election, the CAC shall meet and elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the CAC and at all ACs and EGMs and conduct the business in accordance with the Constitution. The Chairperson shall sign all minutes of ACs and EGMs. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall undertake these duties.

(3) The CAC shall meet not more than 28 days and not less than 21 days before the first day of the AC to prepare the agenda for the AC, whereupon the Directorate shall issue to each

member of the CAC a copy of motions and constitutional amendments duly proposed and seconded and received at the Section Secretariat in accordance with Articles 9(9) and 19(1).

(4) The duties of the CAC shall be:

(a) to examine all motions submitted for the AC or EGM to ensure that they come within the competence of the AC or EGM to determine; and to rule out of order any motions that do not do so;

(b) to draft composite motions for submission to the AC or EGM;

(c) to decide what emergency motions (if any) shall be brought before the AC or EGM;

(d) to arrange an order in which motions may be taken and to make such arrangements as it deems necessary;

(e) to make such recommendations as it deems fit to expedite the business of the AC or EGM.

(f) to determine, upon appeal of any member or affiliated organization, the constitutionality of any decision, act or omission of the EC.

(5) All CAC reports shall be put to the AC or EGM for its decision on them. The AC or EGM alone shall have the power to accept or reject CAC reports.

Article 11: Extraordinary General Meeting

(1) (a) The National Board may convene an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). Any member or affiliated organization may petition the National Board to convene such a meeting, stating the proposed purpose of the meeting. The National Board must consider such petition within six weeks of its receipt. In the event of its

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refusal or failure to convene an EGM, at least 5% of the members of the Section as on the date of the previous AC may demand that the National Board convene such a meeting and shall serve such notice on the Chairperson of the National Board.

(b) The National Board, within seven days of a decision by the National Board or a valid proposal or demand under Article 11(1)(a) to convene an EGM, shall post on the Section website by email to membership and through local group notifications, the notice convening an EGM and indicating the purpose for which the meeting is sought. Such a meeting shall take place not less than 28 days and not more than 60 days after the original proposal is received at the Section Secretariat, except where the EGM is convened as provided under Article 13 (7).

(c) Members or affiliated organizations seeking to exercise their rights under Article 11(1)(a) shall, on the petition of at least 15 members or affiliated organizations, be facilitated insofar as is practicable by the Section Secretariat.

(2) Any proposal submitted under Article 11(1) shall specify the nature of business for which the meeting is sought.

(3) Attendance, voting entitlements, order of debate and decisions shall be as herein provided for ACs.

Article 12: Elections

(1) All those entitled to vote in the election of the National Board, as determined under Article 9(4) shall be eligible for membership of any of the committees elected by the Annual Conference or the Extraordinary General Meeting.

(2) A candidate for election at an AC or EGM shall be proposed

and seconded by voting members and/or accredited nominees of affiliate organisation, as determined under Article 9 (4). Nominations shall be received at the Section Secretariat at least 28 days before the AC or EGM. Ballot papers, together with short biographical descriptions of not more than 100 words per candidate, shall be prepared and given to all members, groups and affiliated organisations attending the AC or EGM. Any member eligible to vote or the voting accredited nominee of an affiliated organisation shall be entitled to cast a ballot at the AC or EGM.

(3) Voting in all elections shall be by secret ballot using the single transferable vote system of proportional representation.

Article 13: The National Board

(1) The National Board shall consist of twelve elected members and the Honorary President (if nominated by the National Board and ratified by the Annual Conference). The Directorate shall be entitled to attend but not vote at meetings of the National Board. The National Board shall have the power to co-opt up to three additional voting members. The employees of the Section may nominate one of their number to attend meetings of the National Board as an observer.

(2) The National Board may nominate as Honorary President any member who is deemed to have made an exceptional contribution to the work and development of the Section.

(3) The twelve other positions on the National Board shall be filled by election to two panels containing six positions each. Elections to the panels shall take place in alternate years with elected members holding office for a two-year term. Elected members shall be eligible for re-election except that no elected member shall hold office for more than three terms consecutively.

(4) (a) In the event of elected member(s) ceasing to hold office, the resulting vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by election at the following AC or EGM. Pending an AC or EGM, the vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by co-option and such co-opted members shall be deemed to be elected members of the National Board for the purposes of Articles 13(4)(b) and 13(7) until the following AC or EGM.

(b) Where the vacancy or vacancies arise during the first year of a two-year term, they shall be filled at the following AC or EGM by the candidates(s) who receive(s) the highest number of preferences after the vacant panel has been filled and such person(s) shall hold office for one year only.

(c) Where no co-options are possible on the basis of Article 13(4)(a) and the number of elected members continuing in office at any time falls to seven or less, the vacancies shall be filled by election at an EGM specially convened for that purpose in accordance with Article 13(7).

(d) Vacancies filled by co-option are not subject to the candidate being in continuous membership of the Section for at least six months prior to co-option. Co-opted members shall be eligible for election to the National Board at the AC following their co-option, regardless of the length of prior membership.

(5) The duties of the National Board shall be to carry out the direction of the AC and any EGM, to manage and supervise the affairs of the Section between ACs including the activities of the paid staff and volunteers of the Section Secretariat, to carry out and enforce observance of this

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Constitution, to be responsible for the proper administration of the funds under its control and to make representations appropriate to the promotion of the aims and objectives of the Section. Decisions shall be taken by simple majority of the members of the National Board present and voting. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall exercise a casting vote.

- (6) The quorum for meetings of the National Board shall be seven elected members. Attendance at meetings can be in person, or via conference/video call. In the event that less than twelve elected members continue to hold office on the National Board at any time, the quorum for meetings of the National Board shall be reduced by the number of vacancies on the National Board.
- (7) If the number of elected National Board members continuing in office at any time falls to seven or less, the National Board shall immediately convene an EGM for the purpose of filling the vacancies on the Committee. Such an EGM shall be convened in accordance with Article 11, except that it shall take place not more than 49 days after the order to convene it.
- (8) The National Board shall appoint from within its ranks:
- (a) a Chairperson
 - (b) a Vice-Chairperson
 - (c) an Honorary Secretary
 - (f) an Honorary Treasurer; and
 - (g) a Youth Secretary
 - (e) such other officers as it deems fit.
- (9) The duties of the Chairperson shall be to preside at all meetings of the National Board and conduct the business in accordance with the Constitution. The Chairperson shall sign all minutes of meetings of the National Board and all official documents that require the signature of the Chairperson and, with the Honorary

Secretary, make arrangements to convene meetings of the National Board as necessary. The Chairperson shall supervise the workings of the National Board and its officers and shall liaise with the Section Directorate to ensure that the paid employees of the Section and volunteer workers in the Section Secretariat carry out the policies of the Section in accordance with the decisions taken by the AC and the National Board. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall undertake the above duties, otherwise the National Board shall elect one of its members to undertake the above duties.

- (10) The Honorary Secretary shall, with the Chairperson, make arrangements to convene meetings of the National Board as necessary. The Honorary Secretary shall be responsible for the recording of the minutes of National Board meetings, ACs and EGMs. In the absence of the Honorary Secretary, the National Board shall elect one of its members to undertake the above duties.
- (11) The Honorary Treasurer shall be responsible for all monies received and expended by the Section; shall ensure that all monies received are regularly paid into the Section's bank accounts; shall keep or supervise the books and accounts showing the income and expenditure of the Section; shall have charge of the passbooks; shall submit on request bankbooks, vouchers, receipts, etc. to the Section's chartered or certified accountant. The Honorary Treasurer shall prepare a financial statement and submit same to the National Board should such be demanded; shall pay accounts as the National Board may order; and shall produce such books, vouchers and documents as may be required by the National Board, AC, EGM or a person or committee duly authorised by them. In the absence of the Honorary Treasurer, the National Board shall select

one of its members to undertake the above duties.

- (12) The Youth Secretary shall be the National Board's liaison officer with any youth structures and networks which may from time to time be established by the section. The Youth Secretary shall advise the National Board on the youth policy of the section.
- (13) The National Board shall meet as often as necessary, provided that it shall meet at least six times in each year of office.
- (14) The National Board shall submit to the Annual Conference a report on the activities of the Section during the preceding year, an independently certified statement of account for the preceding year, the Section plan and outline budget for the current planning cycle – as approved by the Planning Conference – and such other reports and documents as may be requested at a preceding Annual Conference.
- (15) The National Board shall have power to appoint working groups and ad hoc committees composed of members to undertake any assignments it may deem necessary.
- (16) The National Board shall have the power to appoint as employees such and so many persons as may be deemed necessary to carry out the work of the Section, including a whole-time Directorate whose principal responsibilities shall be to co-ordinate the work of any other employees and volunteers in the Section Secretariat and to carry out all lawful duties allotted by the Annual Conference and the National Board.
- (17) No members, groups or affiliated organizations shall take public action or issue statements invoking the name of Amnesty International without the prior approval of, or in compliance with guidelines laid down by, the National Board.

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- (18) The National Board shall have power to appoint Trustees to hold and manage property on behalf of the Section.
- (19) The members of the National Board and Section Secretariat shall not be personally liable for the liabilities of the Section.
- (20) The National Board shall convene ACs and EGMs in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

Article 14: The President

Where the National Board exercises its discretion to nominate an Honorary President of the Section, the nomination shall be presented to the AC for ratification before the nominee may take up office. Notice of such a nomination shall be given in the final notice of the AC issued not less than 28 days before the AC.

The term of office is limited to a period of five years; after such time has elapsed, the nomination must be again presented to the AC for ratification.

In the event that the AC declines to ratify the nomination, the National Board shall withdraw the nomination.

In the event that the National Board decides to seek the removal from office of the Honorary President for stated grave misconduct, the office holder shall be deemed to be suspended from office pending a final decision on the matter by the AC.

The Honorary President shall be entitled to attend, participate and vote at National Board meetings.

Article 15: National Consultative Conference

- (1) The National Board may convene a National Consultative Conference to assist the deliberations of the National Board in preparing the Section's response to matters raised by the International Board or the International Secretariat or for such other purpose as may be deemed necessary by the National Board.
- (2) Attendance at the National Consultative Conference shall be open to:
 - (a) the members of the National Board;
 - (b) one delegate nominated by each group;
 - (c) one delegate nominated by each affiliated organization;
 - (d) members of working groups and ad hoc committees;
 - (e) regular office volunteers and staff; and
 - (f) such other persons and individual members as may be invited by the National Board.
- (3) The Conference shall have consultative status only. No decision taken by the Conference shall be binding upon the National Board.
- (4) The Chairperson of the National Board shall preside over the deliberations of the National Consultative Conference; or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chairperson of the National Board shall preside. In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, the Honorary President may opt to take the chair, otherwise the Conference shall elect a Chairperson from amongst those present at the meeting.

Article 16: Financial Provisions

- (1) The National Board shall establish and maintain under its management and control accounts into which shall be paid all monies received by the Section.

- (2) The National Board shall maintain bank accounts to be operated by the Chairperson and the Honorary Treasurer or such other members of the National Board or employees of the Section as the National Board may authorise by resolution.
- (3) The financial year of the Section shall commence on the first day of January and end on the last day of the same year.
- (4) The annual accounts shall be certified by an independent chartered or certified accountant appointed by the National Board and approved by the AC and such accountant shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- (5) The accounts of the preceding year, as certified, shall be submitted for the approval of the AC.
- (6) The National Board shall, in line with the high level outline budget approved by the preceding Annual Conference, consider and approve, following any necessary amendments, an annual budget for the Section.

Article 17: Emblem

The emblem of the Section shall consist of a burning candle entwined by a single strand of barbed wire on a plain background, accompanied or unaccompanied by the words 'Amnesty International' as provided for by the Amnesty International Global Identity Guidelines

Article 18: Dissolution of the Section

In the event that the Section should be dissolved for whatever cause, all existing assets and outstanding liabilities of the Section shall become the assets and liabilities of the International Board of Amnesty International.

Article 19: Amendments to the Constitution

- (1) (a) Any provisions of this Constitution may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting

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at an AC or EGM. Either the National Board or the CAC may propose such an amendment or repeal. Any member or affiliated organization may petition the National Board or CAC to propose any amendment or repeal. In the event of either Committee refusing or failing to do so, at least 5% of the members of the Section as on the date of the previous AC may propose an amendment or repeal. The terms of the amendment or repeal shall

be received at the Section Secretariat not later than 28 days before the AC or EGM and shall be posted on the Section website not less than 14 days before the AC or EGM

- (b) Members or affiliated organizations seeking to exercise their rights under Article 19(1)(a) shall, on the petition of at least 15 members or affiliated organizations, be facilitated insofar as is practicable by the Section Secretariat.

- (2) Any amendment made to the Constitution shall be referred for approval to the next meeting of the International Board of Amnesty International following the date of such amendment.
- (3) The articles of this Constitution shall replace those of the previous Constitution of the Section and shall become effective on approval by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at an AC.